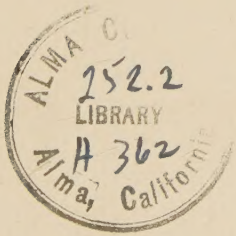
SHORT SERMONS

ON

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

A PLAIN AND PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE FAITH
IN A SERIES OF BRIEF DISCOURSES FOR THE
ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR

BY THE
REV. P. HEHEL, S.J.



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An Explanation of the Catholic Faith in Short Sermons.

I. Faith.

"I will teach you by the hand of God what the Almighty hath; and I will not conceal it."—Job xxvii. 11.

SYNOPSIS.—Every one wants to be happy, this is a condition of nature. We must search out, then, what it is that will give us true and lasting happiness. Our Lord is the only One Who can teach us the way to true bliss. We must believe then all that He teaches. This is faith. The idea of faith—the object of faith. Some articles of faith are absolutely necessary for salvation. Others are not so necessary. To be saved we must believe that: 1. There is a God; 2. That He will reward the good and punish the wicked. Again, faith alone is not sufficient, we must act according to the teachings of that faith. Here we have the science of the saints, and this consists in the knowledge and practice of Christian doctrine. The gift of faith is very precious—Solomon's idea of it. Let our prayer, like St. Augustine's, be to know God and to know ourselves.

St. Augustine says: "Everybody, whoever he may be or whatever he may wish, carries in his heart a natural longing for happiness and bliss; everybody wants to be happy." My dear friends, if you earnestly wish to satisfy this longing for bliss and happiness, you must address this longing to some one who can satisfy it. Do you wish to know His name? It is the name which we hear and speak of with the greatest reverence; it is the most holy name of "Jesus." Yes, Jesus it is who can teach us to find happiness, who shows us the way to it and gives us the means for obtaining it. He is, indeed, what His name signifies, "Bliss-giver." "I am the way, the truth and the life," He says of Himself. Very well, then! let us listen to His teaching, let us be led by His hand, let us rely upon His aid, then bliss and happiness will surely be our portion. The subject we will dwell on to-day is faith. To obtain salvation it is necessary before all else to possess faith.

Therefore we must *believe*. It follows then that every one must learn to know the idea as well as the object of faith, or, in other

words, every one must know what it means, to believe! what faith comprises; that is, what truths it contains. The doctors of the Church tell us that belief in certain truths of faith is absolutely necessary and that no one can be saved who does not believe. Others, on the contrary, though also necessary, are so only in consequence of a commandment; hence, one may go to Heaven without knowing these. But it is the law of the Church that we must learn these if we have sufficient understanding and opportunity to do so. For the present we shall confine ourselves to those points which every rational Christian must know and believe or lose his immortal soul.

Two truths are necessary above all others: First, that there is a God, and, second, that God rewards the good and punishes the wicked. St. Paul the Apostle says: "For he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and is a rewarder of them that seek Him." (Hebr. xi. 6.) We must believe then:

1. That there is only one God,
2. That He is the creator, preserver and governor of all things,
3. That in God there are three persons—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost,
4. That the Son of God became man for the love of us, and redeemed us by His death upon the cross.
5. That God is a just judge, who will reward good and punish evil.

All these points a Christian should and must know to be saved. For this reason there was nobody admitted to baptism in the earliest days of the Church who was not fully instructed in all these points. For St. John says: "And this is life everlasting; that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." (St. John xvii. 3.) No doubt you have known all this before, but perhaps you do not know and understand all that is contained in these, the greatest mysteries of our faith, as may be expected from grown-up children of the Lord. Let me tell you that these five cardinal points contain so much that is necessary to know that it would take me a whole year to explain all, even were I to talk to you every day. I hope that from what you are going to hear you will not only learn much, but also learn to *do* much, so as to live in accordance with the truths, which you will learn. For not he who knows, but he who does what his knowledge teaches him will be saved. What good

is it to a craftsman or an artist to know his art or trade perfectly if he does not put his knowledge into practice? Of what avail is it to the mother of a household to know how to care for the house if she remains idle the day long? There are many thousands burning in the abyss of hell who knew what was necessary for salvation. But it is for that reason that they are damned, and are sunk in hell deeper than the ignorant because they did not live according to their knowledge and enlightenment. Holy Scripture tells us: A servant who knows the will of his master and does not carry it out will be punished all the more severely. The youth who asked Christ what he should do to gain eternal life knew perfectly well what was written in the law and repeated the Commandments to the Saviour without hesitation. But that did not satisfy our Lord Jesus Christ, for He added: "Do it and thou shalt have life."

Therefore, we will to-day begin a course in Christian doctrine, and in all these sermons which I intend to deliver upon our holy faith it will be my principal endeavor to explain to you as clearly as possible what you must know to obtain salvation, and at the same time to show you how you must live in accordance with this doctrine; how, in fact, you should practice what you have heard and learned. This is the science of the saints, which consists in the knowledge and practice of Christian doctrine. This it was that brought them to such glory, as no human eye has ever seen. This gift is worth more than gold and silver, and its value is greater than all earth can give us. Solomon thought more of this wisdom and knowledge, which God had given him in such a degree that there hath been no one like him before nor since nor ever shall be, than of all the boundless wealth, whereby he surpassed all the kings and princes of the earth. Often did he say that all these treasures were to him as nothing compared with the wisdom given him by God and which he would not part with for all the things of the world. Such great wisdom as Solomon's we do not ask for ourselves, my dear friends. It will satisfy us if we obtain that for which the learned St. Augustine prayed before everything else, when he exclaimed: "O, my God, would that I knew Thee, would that I knew myself." Yes, my God, give me only so much grace that I may know Thee and know myself. If I know and understand Thee I would know all that is necessary to know, even if I knew nothing else.

II. Faith—Right Faith—Christian Faith.

"Have the faith of God."—St. Mark xi. 22.

SYNOPSIS.—God's vision to Ezechial to warn him of the fate of Israelites. God's vision to us to unfold the mysteries of religion. Faith necessary to understand these mysteries. What is it to believe? What does Christian faith imply? What does "to believe rightly" signify? No mistake can be made in accepting what faith teaches, for God is the author of faith, and He cannot err, nor deceive. Difference between faith and knowledge. Appeal for strong, real, earnest faith.

When God wanted to instruct Ezechiel about the punishments which He was about to inflict upon Israel, and which the prophet was to announce to them, He held a great book before him, which was written within and without and said: "Eat this book, Ezechiel; thy bowels shall be filled with this book, which I give thee." And Ezechiel opened his mouth and ate the book and swallowed all wisdom and knowledge. (Ez. iii. 2.) Of course, this story must be taken figuratively, not literally.

When God said: "Eat this book," He meant by that, take this book and learn what it contains, make yourself thoroughly familiar with its contents and let it become part of yourself.

My dear friends, we also have a book, like the one that was given to Ezechiel; a book which contains many great mysteries, which are not easily understood, but need explanation and interpretation; it is the book of divine revelations. To introduce you into the mysteries of this book is the task I have set myself.

Therefore I say to you to-day "Eat!" "How are we to do this?" You will ask, and I say to you, that you must, like the prophet, take the divine word and the eternal truths, as they are to be read in this book and as I shall explain them to you, as the food of your soul. Through faith and only through faith can the contents of this book become your property. These secrets cannot be understood without faith. Faith grasps with zeal and avidity that which neither reason nor science can fathom. Above all it is necessary then, that you must believe. I will first tell you of that faith, which it is absolutely necessary to possess, if you want to understand the mysteries of this holy doctrine. To this end let us ask:

1. What does it mean, "to believe"?
2. What does "Christian belief" mean?
3. What does it mean, "to believe rightly"?

I.

What does it mean "to believe"?

"To believe" in general, means to take for granted the sayings of another, to accept and consider as true, whatever he may tell us. Naturally we cannot consider everything that is told us to be true, nor can we believe everybody. He who claims to speak the truth, must be trustworthy. He is so, if, first, he is a prudent, sensible man, who understands well what he is talking about and who is not easily deceived, and second, if he is a good, honest man, who lives the truth and does not wish to deceive. For this reason we are more inclined to believe a man of education than an ignorant man; an adult rather than a child, a serious person rather than a jester, or if it concerns spiritual matters, matters of conscience, a priest rather than a layman. *All this is human belief,* and we pass over to the second question.

II.

What does "Christian belief" mean?

If what we are to believe does not come from *man* but from *God,* if our belief is strong, *because God has made known what we believe,* then our belief is not human, but it is supernatural. This supernatural belief is founded on, first, God's infinite wisdom, by virtue of which He knows and understands everything perfectly, so that He can never err, and secondly, because He is the eternal truth and love, and will not and cannot deceive us. To consider everything as true, which God has revealed through His Son Jesus Christ, is "Christian belief."

And this is the belief which is necessary to understand the teachings of which we speak. This is the faith which the holy Fathers call a gift of God, and a light, by which man is so illumined that he assents to all that God has revealed through Christ and that is presented by His infallible Church for our belief.

It is called, a *gift of God,* because the faith is given to us by God without our merit. St. Paul writes: "For by grace you are saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; for it is the gift of God." (Ephes. ii. 8.)

That God has spoken to us and that we have believed His words, is therefore a work of grace. It is a work of grace, that we are

born among Christian people and that we have the good fortune of hearing God's relevation. It is also an unmerited gift of divine grace that we readily accept the word of God as it is proclaimed to us. Faith is also called *a light.* As light shines for man, so that he can perceive things that are visible, which cannot, however, be perceived in darkness, so faith enlightens our reason so that it can see and perceive what in itself is invisible and what could never be perceived without it. With the help of this *light,* the human mind understands obscure and incomprehensible doctrines of faith and assents to them and stands steadfastly by them, because it sees they are truths revealed by God.

Again this light is a gift of God for which we owe Him the greatest gratitude. How beautifully St. Augustine depicts the effects of this light of faith, to which he owed his conversion. He says: "Thou hast called me, O Lord. Thy word, 'Let there be light,' resounded mightily in the ear of my heart and there was light; the great cloud disappeared and the darkness was removed from the eyes of my mind. I saw Thy light and recognized Thy voice and I say: Truly, Lord, Thou art my God, who has led me out of darkness and away from the shadow of death; Thou hast called me to the wonderful light and behold! I see! To Thee, O Sublime, one thousand and thousands of thanks!" The holy Fathers of our Church, therefore call our faith rightly the *light of the soul,* the door of life, the foundation of eternal salvation. And this faith is necessary to comprehend the mysteries of our religion.

From what has been said follows the answer to the third question:

III.

What does it mean, to believe rightly?

1. *To believe rightly means to believe for God's sake;* that is, to believe because either God Himself or through His Son, or through the Catholic Church, has commanded us to believe this or that. Therefore you must not say, you believe this or that article because you have been born and brought up amongst Christians who believe it, or because your parents believe it, or because there are others in your country, or in your surroundings, or in your family who believe, or because your clergy told you so, or because it seems to you reasonable, and credible; but solely because God has said so.

2. *To believe rightly means to believe all;* that is, everything

without exception that God teaches us through the Catholic Church, be it written, or be it tradition; be it in Holy Writ or not. For Christ commissioned His Apostles to teach *all* nations and to teach them *everything* that He had told them. By that He has imposed upon everybody who hears His teachings, the duty to believe *all* of it. If any one were to reject one simple truth of the faith, though he accepted all others, he would come under the category of those of whom St. James says:

"Now, whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all." St. Augustine speaks very strikingly of those who believe some articles of faith and reject others: "If in the Gospel, you believe only what you want to believe, and reject what you do not want to believe, you believe in yourself more than in the Gospel; for if your own reason may accept or reject in Holy Writ, whatever it pleases, you do not subject yourself to the authority of Scripture; but you subject Scripture to your will."

3. *To believe rightly means to believe fully, doubting nothing in the least;* that is, to be so steadfast in faith, that neither doubt, temptation, persecution can unsettle your belief. For all that the Catholic Church charges us to believe, has been revealed to her by God; has been proved by many examples, and confirmed by many and such glorious testimonies.

Consider: (*a*) The sanctity and purity of our faith, which teaches us to avoid even the shadow of sin and urges us to practice every virtue.

(*b*) The immutability of our faith which stands to-day as firm as a rock after nineteen centuries of persecutions, false teachings and heresies of all kind.

(*c*) The wonderful way in which our faith has risen and spread over the whole world, not proclaimed by kings and the powerful ones of this world, but by simple, untutored fishermen, not by cunning and fraud, money or force of arms, but solely by the force of the divine word and by that eloquence which the grace of God produced in those simple fishermen.

(*d*) That so many men, learned, wise and virtuous, have investigated all the points of our faith, and have then considered it their sacred duty to give their assent to all.

(*e*) That so many prophecies have been fulfilled in the Founder of our hóly religion, Jesus Christ; that thousands upon thousands of miracles have been wrought and are still being performed in the

Catholic Church; that men, weak, frail men have exercised through this faith such a power and force that even the dead had to obey, when commanded in the name of Jesus. Remember also, that millions and millions of martyrs considered it their greatest happiness to suffer the most terrible torments and to die for the truth of this faith.

Is there any faith which can give such credentials as our faith? How true are the words of the psalmist: "Thy testimonies are become exceedingly credible." (Psalm xcii. 5.)

In the face of so many convincing truths, it must be considered the greatest folly to allow any doubt to arise in our minds concerning the teaching of our Church. Folly, indeed, it would be, to doubt what is put down in the Gospel, what is contained in our faith, what has been proclaimed by the Apostles and holy teachers, what has been confirmed by miracles proven by reason and testified to by the very elements themselves.

4. *To believe rightly means to believe in holy simplicity;* that is to say, we should not too curiously ponder over mysteries, as if we desired to see through them with our eyes and grasp them with our hands. St Paul says, we should hold reason and mind in captivity and subject them to faith. We must believe what we do not see, even what we do not understand. We do not believe because we see, but because God has spoken. And this is right. Our reason and our senses can deceive us. For instance, we look with our eyes at the sun and come to the conclusion that it is no larger than a disk, and yet its surface is twelve thousand times larger than that of the earth. We think that the rainbow really contains colors in itself, and yet it consists of nothing but vapors, which are illuminated by the rays of the sun, by a peculiar refraction. A stick put into the water appears crooked and yet it is straight. Thus our senses deceive us.

And how often does not our reason lead us astray! How often do we not have to acknowledge that we were mistaken in our judgment! The various opinions of the most learned men in regard to the same subject, prove sufficiently that reason cannot always be trusted. As Solomon says: "The sophistry of man is deceiving and his ideas without avail."

But what our faith teaches, that is sure and true, and certain, beyond all error, because God has revealed it and God cannot err.

If we are to believe only that which we see with our eyes and un-

derstand with our reason, then there will be no question of faith; but of knowledge. If, for instance, we believe that the sun and stars exist because we see them, or that the whole is greater than its part, because human reason can understand that, then we have not faith, but knowledge. To believe means to hold something as true and certain, that we neither have seen nor do see, but that we have heard of from others.

Further it is not sufficient to believe in a general way. One must also know what is to be believed in particular, that is, the various articles of faith and particularly those, the knowledge of which is necessary for our salvation. Therefore to believe rightly, we must know the subject of our faith. We must not doubt God, because many things are beyond our comprehension. If in the natural order, there are so many things that puzzle, why not in the supernatural? We must concede, that God knows more than we poor mortals can understand. That should be sufficient. Christ has told our mother, the Catholic Church, all that we should believe and the Church has instructed us, her children. Therefore, we must accept everything, without exception, without doubting, without reasoning. That means, to believe rightly, according to the precept, "Have faith in God."

III. There is a God.

"For by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby."—Wisd. xiii. 5.

SYNOPSIS.—The star which led the wise men and compelled them to adore the Infant Saviour also compels us to acknowledge that there is a God. How strange that beings endowed with reason will not admit the existence of God, since all Nature proclaims Him. All that is within us and on us, all that is without us, give testimony to the truth of the fact that there is a God. This belief has always been general among all civilized peoples, and even pagans admit the existence of some Supreme Being. As Holy Scripture testifies "it is only the fool who says there is no God."

The wonderful star, which appeared in the firmament and led the wise men of the Orient to the knowledge and adoration of the Son of God, proclaimed to the world the principal article of our faith: **"There is a God."**

"And behold, the star which they had seen in the East, proceeded before them, until it arrived over the place where the child lay, and there it stood still." That the wise men recognized in this extraordinary star a messenger from heaven has been looked upon as a wonderful event by all interpreters of Holy Scripture. There has been a difference of opinion in regard to how it happened and as regards the nature of this star. Some say, that at the time Christ was born there could be seen a golden ring around the sun, in the center of which there appeared a virgin with a child in her arms. Others say, that this extraordinary star hovered above the wise men like a shining angel. According to another opinion the star in the shape of a fiery column guided the wise men like the star which led the Israelites out of Egypt. Others again think, that the wise men knew of the words of the pagan prophet Balaam: "I see Him, but not now; I look upon Him but from afar; there comes a star out of Jacob and a staff arises out of Israel;" and as at the time of the birth of Christ the expectation that a Saviour of mankind was soon to be born, was general amongst the heathen nations, the wise men had come to the conclusion at the appearance of the shining light in the firmament, that He must have been born then and they proceeded forthwith to follow it.

Be this as it may, it matters not; whether the extraordinary light was produced by the natural combination of two planets or in some other natural way; the one thing remains wonderful, that these pious pagans were led by this star to the crib of the Divine Son, to the knowledge of God.

Is it not something more to be wondered at that a human being, who has reason to know, eyes to see and hands to feel with, does not wish to acknowledge the existence of God? Not only the light of faith, but our own nature, our whole being; yes, all the stars that shine in the heavens; all the flowers and plants that bloom on the earth, all the birds that sing in the air, in fact, everything that lives and moves and exists, all give unimpeachable testimony of the truth, that *"There is a God."*

To understand this, we need not call to our aid the light of our faith, but solely the light of reason, we need only look about us with our eyes. We shall then be thoroughly convinced that, even if there had been no Christian revelation, we should still be forced to acknowledge, by all that we perceive

I. In and on us,
II. Outside of us,

the existence of God.

I.

1. The pagan philosopher Epicurus once said to the notorious atheist, Galenus: "Observe your body and its wonderful structure, and then tell me whether you still doubt the existence of a God! Behold, I will give you a hundred years in which to reflect upon it, so that you may examine whether you can discover a single fault in the entire human body, or whether you could, perhaps, alter any of the members of the body without thereby depriving it at the same time of beauty, usefulness, power and strength. Surely, no man, only a God was capable of creating such a glorious model, such a wonderful masterpiece!"

This from a pagan! Who amongst us does not feel and acknowledge the truth of his words? Let each one observe himself, his nature, his corporal condition. How skilfully, how masterly, in what order do the many limbs, and veins, and nerves merge one into another, support each other, and move beside one another! Each one has its particular use, its particular function, and everything that it requires to perform this. Look at your hands, for example! With these you are to work, and are they not perfectly arranged for that purpose? Could you imagine them other than they really are? Suppose they were stiff, that all the fingers were of the same length, that they were placed all in a row, and had no nails, how awkwardly you would do your work, how much time you would waste, and how few things you would be able to do perfectly or not at all. Imagine that the bones and veins were exposed instead of being covered, how often you would hurt yourselves, how much pain you would have to endure from certain kinds of work, how often, indeed, your life would be endangered! The hands then are arranged perfectly for work, and it is the same with every other member of the human body; the head directs the whole body; the eye enables us to see; the ears to hear; the nose to smell; the mouth, teeth and throat to properly masticate our nourishment and thereby sustain the body; the tongue to speak, the shoulders and back to bear burdens; the feet to walk from one place to another.

2. Yet not only on us, but also in us, everything is wonderfully

ordered and arranged. If we look into the interior of the human body we shall be astounded by the contemplation of the extraordinary number of its parts, their manifold variety and at the same time, their wonderful simplicity.

The bones with their solidity and cohesion form the framework of the edifice; the sinews connect all the separate pieces; the muscles furnish movement like springs; the nerves spread themselves all over the parts and produce a practical communication between them. Our Creator has given us organs to digest our food and render it fit to give us nourishment and strength. Other organs He has given us which distribute this nourishing material to the various parts of the body. And the head itself,—what a wonderful organ! It is so small and yet it is capable of so much. Here have we the seat of the passions, inclinations, desires and thoughts.

3. Tell me, are these not wonderful things? Is it possible, that all this could have originated by accident or of itself? Would it not rather be the working of a power that formed and arranged all this and put it together? And who else is this power but God?

The contemplation of our own selves lead us then to the knowledge of the truth, that *"There is a God."*

We shall find this truth also outside of ourselves, when we look upon the great and wonderful universe.

II.

Wonderful is the universe.

1. See, how everything is put in order, how things follow each other in rotation and fit into each other; how everything has a certain degree of perfection, a certain weight and measure, and what is the most wonderful, is that all created matter is divided into many, often contrary species, without one interfering with the other, or disturbing the general order of things.

There are things which are simple and have nothing in common with others, like the four elements: Air, fire, water and earth. There are things, which have something of several elements, such as snow, rain and hail. There are things which are mixed in a more perfect manner, but are without life; like stone, ore, metal, gold and silver. There are things in which besides their perfect mixture we can detect life, but life without reason or sensibility, such as

trees, plants, flowers and vegetable growth. There are things again which have life and sensibility but no reason, like the animals; there are the creatures, endowed with life, feeling and a reason. There are finally, creatures, who have no body but are pure spirits, namely, the heavenly beings or angels, and amongst them there is established a certain order, some being more perfect than others.

2. Contemplate further how for the fructification of the earth, and the preservation of man and all the animals, the seasons of the year follow each other in perfect order. After winter comes spring, then summer and finally, autumn; how constantly night changes into day; how the sun illuminates the earth by day, and the moon and stars do this by night; how heat varies with cold, and how in everything there reigns the most complete and beautiful order.

What do you think then? That all this too has an accidental origin? Has put itself together in such magnificent order, without a higher force and power having so ordered it? If I were to show you a beautiful edifice, a grand palace or temple, and would tell you, that all its component parts had fallen together in that order accidentally, would you not consider such an assertion ridiculous and impossible? Would it then not be more foolish to think that all we see in us, on us and outside of us has had its origin accidentally and not by a superior power? Therefore, St. Gregory says: "Every man, who is not foolish, when he contemplates his own being and considers that he is endowed with reason, will acknowledge from that alone, that there must be a God, who has created him."

The belief in a higher being has at all times been so general, that even the pagan Cicero writes: "There is no race so wild and barbarian, who is not aware that there is a God to adore, even though they do not know which God to worship."

And indeed, we find that heathen people have looked upon sun and moon, fire and wood, stone and animals as divine beings; but never do they deny the existence of a God. Holy Scripture therefore says: "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God." Only the fool, who stubbornly shuts his eyes against the light of truth, denies the existence of God. "In Him we live, in Him we move, in Him we have our being." Let us under all circumstances believe then in God and hope for His aid in life and in death.

IV. God Visible in His Creation.

"For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."—Rom. i. 20.

SYNOPSIS.—However different men may be in their make up—or in their method of life, one thing is certain, they are united in striving for success. Some seek it in one line—others in a different line—all seek it. But how few seek what Mary and Joseph sought, viz., Jesus Christ, the true God. Where is God to be found? 1. In His image—man; 2. In His footstool—creation. Look at ourselves and we see God. Nature is a grand, wide open book, wherein we read by one word, i.e., God. Even loathsome creatures lead us to the same conclusion. Some refuse to know God—others refuse to worship Him. But they know Him when they have need of Him.

However different the activities of men may be on earth, they are all united in striving for something. Some are striving for luck and plenty; others for praise and fame; others for favor from those in exalted positions; others again for advantage and success in business. One man will seek health and a long life; another cares for nothing but art and science; one man seeks only amusement, while another grasps after the good things of the world. Some seek roots and herbs on the tops of the mountains; others gold and silver in the bowels of the earth. If we contemplate all this, it must seem to us that the whole world is like an ant-heap, where everything lives and moves, and runs, and creeps, where everybody seeks what is of use to him to carry home and hide there. But, I would like to ask, is there anybody in this world, who can truly say, that he seeks for nothing else than what Mary and Joseph sought so laboriously for three days and three nights and finally found in the temple, namely, Jesus, the true and only God; the highest good; the treasure of heaven and earth, our only salvation, our eternal bliss? Is it not true that there are very, very few who would lift a foot for Him, much less seek for Him for three days and three nights. But there will come a time when, as He Himself says: "You shall seek me, but you will not find me." Then they will say: "I have been seeking God for so many years to save me from these fiery flames and give me salvation!" But they shall never find Him.

Where is God to be found if we want to seek Him at the present time?

The answer is: He is to be found everywhere, at all places, in all things which we see on earth. How beautiful are the words

of St. Thomas on this subject: "God has imprinted His footsteps upon all creatures, which are less than man, but upon man He has imprinted His image, so that, whoever wishes to seek God can find Him in His footsteps as well as behold Him in His image."

You will remember what I told you lately, namely, that even without revelation, merely by the use of reason, we know that there is a God. To-day I will show you, then, you can see God with your own eyes.

1. *In His image* (*man*).
2. *In His footsteps* (*in the other creatures*).

I.

We read in Holy Scripture that God has made Himself visible to man in many different ways and forms. To Moses He showed Himself in the burning bush. To the Israelites He revealed Himself now in a light cloud, now in a fiery column, and at other times in lightning and thunder. Hovering over Jesus Christ He appeared in the form of a dove. St. John the Evangelist, in his visions on the Isle of Patmos, saw Him in many mysterious forms, such as a flame or the sun or a venerable old man. To others He appeared in the form of man, magnificent and glorious. Frequently He has shown Himself in the form of an infant, or a poor beggar, or a deserted invalid. Such appearances are special graces with which God sometimes favors His elect, but which are not at all needed to manifest God. All that is necessary is to open our eyes and look at ourselves or anything that comes within our vision and we will see God plainly revealed to our vision.

How does it happen, then, that we can see God in us and in other creatures? Let us answer in the words of St. Paul: "The invisible in Him is since the creation of the world recognizable and visible in all created things." Of course we cannot see God in this world with our corporal eyes as clearly as He is in Himself; but we can recognize that which is invisible in Him in the works of His omnipotence, particularly in His image. You have never seen our Holy Father Leo XIII. and you will probably never see him. Now suppose you go into a room where you see a picture under which it says: "Leo XIII., Roman Pontiff." Immediately you think. That is the present Pope; that is his picture. Now I know how he

looks, though I have never seen him. I see here his portrait, his image, and I am informed by those who have seen him that it is a good likeness."

In the same way we see God daily, hourly, yea, at this very moment in His living image. Where is this image? My dear Christians, it is in you, in me; in fact in every human being. Who says this? God Himself, who has made us, "For by Him all has been made that is made," says St. John. And when God formed the first man out of the earth, He said to Himself: "Let us make man to our image and likeness." (Gen. i. 26.)

Skilful artists draw the maps of the world upon a sheet of paper, and show whole countries and nations within a small space, so that the eye can completely overlook at one glance things which are in reality hundred of miles apart. In the same way God has stamped the universe, the whole of creation, upon man, but He has done more; He has portrayed *Himself* in the *soul* of man. St. Augustine remarks: "The other creatures are merely the footsteps of God, but man is the *copy*, the *image* of God."

We therefore need only to look at ourselves to see God in us. As the image of God, man possesses an immortal spirit endowed with reason and a free will. God Himself is the eternal, infinitely perfect spirit.

II.

We can recognize God distinctly not only in ourselves, but also in all irrational creatures, His footsteps. St. Jerome says: "Whatever we may contemplate, God shines forth from each creature as its creator." Like in a painting or other work of art, the hand of the artist becomes apparent. St. Augustine explains this beautifully in a simile explaining the human soul. He says: "The soul lives in every one of us, but one cannot see the soul of another, because as a pure spirit it is invisible." But because you see that I move, or stand still, or walk or do whatever I have a mind to, you recognize therefrom that there must be a soul in me, and you are as certain and sure of it as if you could really see my soul. If you then judge from my actions that there is a soul in me, you must recognize in the works of all creatures their creator."

It is, therefore, not necessary to study and examine and meditate upon the question how we may recognize God. We can see Him with our eyes in His creatures which manifest the invisible

God. No one can excuse himself by saying that he is not intelligent or learned enough, or that he cannot read or write St. Paul says: "You need read no other book than the book of the world. There you have a great book in which you can recognize God and read all His works, however stupid and unsophisticated you may be." The hermit Antonius, when he was once asked how he could live in such solitude without books, gave the beautiful answer: "I have the very greatest book I shall never read to the end. The whole immeasurable world is my book, in which I read the glory of God."

And indeed everything is described in this book, heaven and earth, stars and the firmament, sun, moon, air, fire and water, angels and man, animals and inanimate creatures, trees and plants and whatsoever has been created. Here all is described so truly and distinctly that each creature proclaims its creator.

There is no creature so contemptible, to repeat the words of the pious author of the "Imitation of Christ," no creature so insignificant that God's goodness does not reveal itself in it. But how can such creatures as wild beasts, toads, snakes or other loathsome animals show us God in His majesty and love?

Let me repeat the answer of a certain pious man to such a question. "When I see some of these loathsome creatures I immediately think of the goodness of God and thank Him on my knees that He has not made me one of them, but instead has created me a reasoning human being. Then again I think that on account of the multitude and vastness of my sins I might in the sight of God be a more abominable object than those poisonous reptiles. This leads me to pray to Him, not to allow me to fall a prey to the much viler creatures, the monsters of hell, who will torment the damned throughout eternity."

Behold, how there is nothing upon earth which does not tell us of God. Beholding the traces of wisdom and power which meet us at every step, who could refrain from exclaiming: "A God has passed by here?" And yet, O God, how many there are who see all this with their eyes and yet they will not acknowledge Thee, their God, who created all these things! How many, indeed, are there of whom St. Paul speaks, that after having known God, they still do not worship Him, but in the blindness and hardness of their hearts they say: 'There is no God! There is no God to command me, no God to reward or punish me."

But God not infrequently proves His existence to these wicked

creatures. A certain man who openly cried there was no God kept a small hotel in a little country village. At this business he found ample opportunity to spread abroad his atheistic views and to give vent to his disgraceful blasphemies. One evening two righteous, God-fearing men entered his place to seek lodgings. From six o'clock in the evening until eleven he bothered them with his irreligious talk and tried to persuade them that there was no God, no judgment, no heaven, no hell, etc. They wanted to refute him with the word of God; but he only ridiculed them the more. At eleven o'clock the two guests went to bed. One of them was greatly grieved at these shameful blasphemies, but the other consoled him, saying: "It is nothing new to meet such scoffers. King David complained more than 3,000 years ago that 'The fool says in his heart there is no God!'"

They had hardly been asleep a half hour when a fire broke out in a neighboring house, and the flames filled the hotel through its many windows with a lurid light. The two men awoke frightened. They imagined that the hotel was on fire, and they ran at once to the landlord's room to awaken him, crying "Fire! Fire!" When the scoffer emerged from his room and saw the lurid light of the fire he clasped his hands together and cried aloud: "O Almighty God, O gracious and merciful God, help me in this awful peril!" One of the men interrupted him, saying: "You unreasonable man! You blasphemed God and declared all evening that there was no God; and now that you are in trouble you call upon Him to help you?"

Alas! how many blasphemers and scoffers there are, who only want to know God when they stand in need of Him!

V. Idolatry.

"He manifested his glory, and they believed in him."—John ii. 11.

SYNOPSIS.—God has revealed Himself from the very beginning, but many have not known Him. Some believed in many gods and thus fell into idolatry. Reason alone proclaims God from its study of the things of the world. But man followed not reason, but adored nature, the elements, fire, water, sun, moon, stars, etc. Others worshiped the world's heroes—Bacchus, Vulcan, Ceres, Mars, Venus, Mercury. Prayers, food, wine, money were offered to these divinities. They were considered human and full of passion. Then Christ came and proclaimed the one true, eternal God. Despite this many are ignorant of God, many are still idolaters. Our duty is to pray for them, and to help by our charity those who give up all to bring the light of truth to these benighted people who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

St. John tells us in to-day's Gospel of the first miracle which Jesus worked in Cana of Galilee, and he closes his narration with these words: "Jesus manifested His glory, and they believed in Him." What powerful conviction is produced in the mind when God shows to man His creative power! As soon as the disciples saw water changed into wine they believed that He who had done this was truly God. All men were not brought to the faith so easily and so quickly. From the beginning God had revealed His glory in innumerable creatures; He had filled the world with the wonders of His omnipotence so that man met Him everywhere his eye rested. Notwithstanding this, who can number the millions who have lived upon earth and did not know God, did not believe Him! Some believed indeed that there must be a Supreme Being, from whom everything proceeded; but they knew so little of this Being that their knowledge did not deserve the name of knowledge. They had the most strange ideas about God, in their imagination they created innumerable gods and fell into the most shocking idolatry.

If I speak to-day of this idolatry in which the people found themselves in their ignorance of the one God, you will perceive what reason you have to thank God that He allowed you to be born within the light of Christianity.

1. From the study of himself, from the creatures of this earth, and the entire structure of the world, by the use of his reason alone man knew this world was not self-existent, but must have had a Creator. Who this founder was, whether one or many, he did not know. In the beginning God's creatures carved out images of wood,

stone or metal, which were to remind them of the invisible God. By degrees they forgot that these images were only representations of God, and the day came when they worshipped these images as God Himself, paying divine honors to them. They prostrated themselves before what they had made with their own hands, and said: "Thou art my god." The greater number considered that these idols were really the gods themselves, and even the more intelligent worshipped these lifeless figures, because they imagined that the image of wood or stone was either the body of a god, or the dwelling place of one.

2. And again, men not only made statues and figures to adore them, but they began at the same time to adore nature and all her works.

They offered sacrifice to the elements and amongst these principally to the fire, because they saw that it contained an extraordinary power, and that it consumed everything, rendering even the hardest metal soft; and when this fire fell from heaven as lightning they deemed it a power not to be mastered. They placed the sun, moon, stars amongst the gods, and were content to deify even the necessaries of life. Hence we find amongst different nations, according to the state of their development, the most heterogeneous divinities, and often the basest, most unsightly, and even despicable things, were adored. Not only were rivulets, brooks, and streams held to be divine, but even animals, such as storks, dogs, goats, lions, crocodiles, and snakes. The giant oaks as well as the insignificant bean received their share of worship. They went so far in this respect that they supposed every creature, every bush, plant, and root had a divinity of its own. They could not bring themselves to believe that one God had created all things.

3. The well informed pagans did not take part in such coarse, foolish idolatry; they did not worship such ignoble things. But they did not know *who* and what God was. They turned away from inanimate and unreasoning nature, but they could not raise themselves *above* nature; the great ones of the earth, conquerors, leaders of the people, inventors of arts and sciences, princes and kings, in fine, men who were distinguished amongst others by their intellectual or corporal powers, these were admitted by them to divine honors. Bacchus taught the Greeks to plant the grape vine, and press the grapes; for this he was considered the god of wine. Ceres, a woman, had instructed men in the tilling of the fields, therefore she was

worshipped as the goddess of harvest; Mars, a war hero, who discovered the art of placing an army in orderly rows and leading them to battle, is therefore worshipped as a war god.

But this was not all. They soon began to deify man as he was, and therefore they not only had tutelar gods and goddesses for every virtue which man can practice, but in the same way for every crime, or every shameful deed, and every vice. The just worshipped Justitia as a divinity; the chaste Vesta; the worldling Venus; the thief, swindler, Mercury; the drunkard, Bacchus.

4. And how were all these divinities worshipped? As their deity was either imaginary or human, they supposed that the actions and manner of living of their gods resembled the actions of men. They imagined, too, that their gods had human bodies and human morals. They offered up their prayer in the morning amidst loud acclamations, and the sounds of flutes and noisy instruments, so as first of all to waken the gods from sleep. They gave them food and poured out wine, so as to appease their hunger and thirst. At night they gave them lights so that they might be able to see in the darkness. Because they looked upon their gods as human. In times of calamity they reviled them as if they were the authors of the temporary misfortunes. Because they considered their gods human, they attributed to them humors and passions, considered them sometimes unjust or partial, as if they sometimes persecuted the good, and protected the wicked. Because they thought the gods were human they not infrequently considered them cruel, revengeful, and implacable, and they even believed that they could please them by human sacrifices. Thus the Persians had the custom of burying persons alive. The ancient historian Herodotus relates that the wife of the Persian King Xerxes, when she was quite old, out of gratitude to the gods for the good health she still enjoyed, caused fourteen children of the noblest Persian families to be buried alive.

Human sacrifices were offered by most intelligent Romans and Greeks. When the Greeks were sailing towards Troy their leader Agamemnon sacrificed his own daughter Iphigenia to the goddess Diana to obtain a good voyage. The Germans also degraded themselves with atrocities of this kind. On certain days they offered up human sacrifices to the god Wotan!

Thus was it with the people; these were the ideas they had formed of God; such unworthy representations did they make of His attributes; so little were they able to bring themselves to the knowledge

of the one God! At last Christ came and changed the water of error into the wine of truth. Men drank of this wine, and immediately their eyes were opened, the power of the serpent's poisonous breath in Paradise was broken. Now they saw clearly that the sun, moon, animals, plants, air, water, heaven and earth were not gods, but that there was only one God from Whom all these things and even the human race originated. This wine was carried by the messengers of the faith from that country where Jesus had lived and taught to the remotest regions. Our ancestors, too, even we ourselves have drunk of this wine, and thereby received the spirit of the right knowledge, so that we know who and what God is. But alas! how many thousands of men still live in error and ignorance! The same error and confusion exists to-day amongst those nations where the light of faith has not yet risen. Many thousands of human beings still worship the sun, moon, stars, and fire, and live on in idolatry.

O, have compassion upon these poor miserable human beings, and help as far as lies in your power those men, those priests, who forsake their country and everything that is dear to them to go to these heathen people and bring them the light of the true knowledge of God! Give generously, let your donations flow into the missionary societies for the work of spreading the faith!

Give with grateful hearts more abundantly during this year for this holy purpose! But you who are not blessed with means, who have no money at your disposal, give what you have: pray! Yes, let us all pray that God may bless the efforts of the missionaries, that those terrible phantoms of darkness and night may vanish, those idols fall, before which so many still bend the knee; let us pray that the light of Christianity may be spread abroad further and further, and that all men may know the Father, and He whom He has sent, Jesus Christ, and that the whole world may exclaim with one voice and heart: "I believe in God!"

VI. The Nature of God; or, What is God?

"And God said: I am who am."—Exod. iii. 14.

SYNOPSIS.—The people of Athens, because of a dread pestilence, erected an altar to the unknown God. St. Paul preached this God to them. Do we understand the nature of this same God? The wisest philosophers of ages could not answer the question, "What is God?" God Himself

answered it when He said, "I am who am." This signifies, 1. The fulness of all things. 2. The eternal One. 3. The unchangeable One. 4. The self-existent One. 5. The all necessary One. 6. The omniscient One. 7. The omnipotent One. 8. The author of all things created. 9. The only supreme and all Good One.

All are called to enjoy Him forever, but how few will finally attain to this enjoyment. How much better all would be if all knew this Supreme Being.

A dreadful pestilence once devastated Greece and carried off men and animals. In their necessity the inhabitants called upon their gods to deliver them from this terrible epidemic. But all their supplications and sacrifices were in vain. Then they thought that there must be another god who could punish them, and whom they had not yet worshipped, for all the known gods had been fervently supplicated, but in vain. Thereupon they prayed to the unknown God to have pity upon them and deliver them from the plague. And behold! they had hardly called upon this God before the pestilence ceased and vanished from the whole country. Filled with joy at this the grateful inhabitants of Athens erected an altar of stone, upon which these words were inscribed: "To the unknown God!" Now when the Apostle St. Paul came to Athens during one of his apostolical journeys, he stood still one day in the middle of the court of justice and said: "Athenians! I see that you are, I might say, in all things hyper-orthodox. For as I went around and saw the images of your gods, I found an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown God!' I will now make known to you what you are worshipping without knowing it." And thereupon he explained to them in a lengthy discourse who this unknown God was whom they ought to adore and worship. What was unknown to the Athenians has long been known to us, my dear brethren. This one God, proclaimed by St. Paul is adored by us. We believe in Him, we call upon Him in all our necessities and dangers. We profess aloud that there is a God in heaven, who has created all things upon this earth. But if I were to ask one of you now, who and what is this God whom you adore, in whom you believe, whose existence you publicly profess: what answer would I receive? I will answer, explaining for you the important question:

What Is God?

Once when the Prince Hiero, of Syracuse, asked the philosopher Simonides, what God was, the latter begged for one day's reflection.

On the following day he appeared before the prince and begged for two more days, and at the expiration of that time he asked for four more days. Now, when the philosopher again asked for more time to consider the question, the prince was greatly astonished. Simonides replied: "Alas! the more and the longer I reflect upon it, the more difficult it becomes for me to tell you what God is."

Timæus did not delay so long when the same question was put to him by the worldly wise Socrates. He answered immediately: "I know well what God is not (namely, neither planet, nor man, nor metal, and so on); but what He is I am unable to say." As I have shown, the heathens knew by their reason and by creatures that there was a God; but it was not possible for them to obtain a knowledge of the nature of God. And no wonder! "For that which is infinite and unfathomable," says Tertullian, "is known only to Him Who in the same way is infinite and unfathomable." If then we wish to know what God is, we must not ask either heaven or earth, sun or moon, star or element, or the angels, but we must ask God Himself who alone knows Himself perfectly. This is what Moses did, and for that reason he was answered by God Himself. For when God sent him to Pharaoh with the commission that he should allow the Israelites to leave Egypt that they might offer sacrifice to Him in the desert, who was their Lord and God, Moses said: "But if the people or Pharaoh should ask me what is your name and who you are, what shall I say to them?" Then God said: "I am Who am. Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: He Who is, hath sent me to you."

In these words God has expressed His nature, and at the same time everything that He is as God. Now hear what God has said of Himself: "I am Who am," *i.e., I* am the abridgment and the fulness of everything which is. Everything that we can say of a being, for instance, that it is beautiful, good, precious, costly, large, intelligent, wise, is said of God. He is the beginning, the continuation and the completion of all things. He fills and embraces all things. "What language," exclaims therefore St. Gregory, "can name Thee, O God? Thou art unpronounceable for every mouth, because Thou it is who hast given speech to every mouth. Thou art incomprehensible because from Thee proceeds all comprehensiveness. O the nothingness of human expressions! Every glorious name belongs to Thee, and yet no one can designate Thee! Being of all beings; that is the only name which is not unworthy of Thee!"

2. I am Who am, *i.e.,* I am what always was, what continually is, what endures for all time and never ceases, what never changes, what is ever unchangeable. For that which changes we cannot say of it that it is for all time, because now on account of its changing it is not what it was formerly, and before was not that which it now begins to be. What has been burnt by the fire we can no longer call wood, but coal or ashes; nor can we say that this is a firebrand, which is still fresh, green wood. In the same way a man who has become tall and old is not the same as he was when a little child, that is, in the powers of his mind and body; still less can we say of a little child that in old age and after death it will be the same as it is now. But God is eternal, consequently unchangeable, everlasting and perpetual. Therefore the Psalmist says: "In the beginning, O Lord, Thou foundedest the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou remainest; and all of them shall grow old like a garment. And as a vesture Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art always the selfsame, and Thy years shall not fail." (Ps. ci. 26, 28.)

3. I am Who am, *i.e.,* I am that which is eternal, without beginning and without end. For that which is only for a time, was before it became anything, nothing, and will again be nothing when it will have passed away with time. And of that which was before and is now no longer it cannot be said that it *is.* But in God there is nothing which now is and formerly was not; nothing which was before in Him and now is no longer there. St. Cassian remarks of this: "I am Who am. God has here with wonderful dignity exalted the question of the eternity of the Divine nature, for nothing is so suitable to say of God as to call Him eternal, The Being which has neither a beginning in the past, nor an end in the future."

4. I am Who am, *i.e.,* I am that which is of itself. For I alone am from and out of myself. All other things are not from themselves, but out of Me and through Me. How long they will be the same depends upon My will, for they are not out of themselves and through themselves. For had there been a time when nothing was then nothing could have ever come into existence, for it is absolutely impossible that that which is not, could produce anything. I am necessarily without a beginning; so that I cannot have an existence from another, but only from myself, from My Divine nature.

5. I am Who am, *i.e.,* I am that which must be as it is, and cannot be any other way. I have nothing that is not necessary to Me.

The kindness, wisdom, omnipotence, sanctity, justice, as well as all the other perfections are my own necessary being. Therefore all these things are absolutely necessary to Me, but in other beings only as much and as far as I will it. In this sense the Gospel says: "None is good but God alone." In this sense the Church prays in the holy sacrifice of the Mass: "Thou only art holy." For there is no angel and no man so good, so wise, so mighty, so holy, that he could not be wiser, better, more powerful, holier. But God of Himself is the most perfect. Therefore human goodness and sanctity in comparison with His goodness and sanctity is as nothing.

6. I am Who am, *i.e.,* I am a simple Being without any admixture. For if I had anything from any other being upon Me, I should not be entirely of myself; I should be what I was not before, I should thus be changeable." But with God there is no change, nor shadow of vicissitude." (James i. 17.)

7. I am Who am, *i.e.,* an omniscient Being, I know everything, the least and the greatest, the past, present and the future, also what men do of their own free will, even the most secret thoughts and impulses of the heart. I know all this in the most perfect way, all at once, everything at the same time, from all eternity. For if I did not know all things at the same time, but some things later, and not everything in the most perfect way, but so that I might err, not all things of myself, but through exterior communication, I should be in a sense dependent; I should attain a perfection which I had not before, consequently a change in my Being.

8. I am Who am, *i.e.,* I am all things and unite in myself everything without measure or bounds. Because I have everything of myself, therefore nothing exists which could restrict Me. For this reason I am unrestricted, limitless, infinite, and therefore an incomprehensible Being which cannot be called anything else.

9. I am Who am, *i.e.,* I am the author and foundation of all things. I am the first cause, on account of which, and through which everything is that is. For this reason I am the creator of all things; and can make without requiring anything to create from. For if I required any substance which did not exist through Me, I should be restricted in My activity, I should no longer be the independent Being which I am.

10. I am Who am, *i.e.,* I alone am God, and there is none to be compared to Me. For if besides Me there was a being like unto Me it would contain all the attributes which I have in My nature, con-

sequently it would be of itself and not of Me. Thus I should no longer be God, because there would be something that was not of Me.

You have now, dear brethren, heard how God Himself describes His Being. We can comprise in a few words that which we have described to-day: God is a Being who of Himself and in Himself is so perfect that we cannot conceive anything greater, better, or more perfect. He is called, and He is, a Being, because He exists not only in our fancy and our imagination, but in truth and reality. He is a Being who is of Himself, because God cannot proceed from any other being; a Being from whom everything that is in existence proceeds; a Being who is of Himself so perfect that there cannot be anything better or more perfect. And for this reason God is called the Supreme and best good which was from all eternity, and which ever will be. We signify this in our language by the word, for when we say "God" it sounds almost as if we said "good."

I shall take occasion to give a special discourse on this word which expresses the entire Being of God, and I shall show you more plainly what God is as the supreme good. This will be the subject of our next instruction.

For to-day I shall take leave of you with the concluding words of the Gospel: "Many are called, but few chosen." O how dreadful, dear brethren, is the lesson to be taken from these words! We know that we are all called, for the heathen, Jew, and heretic are called too. But who can tell whether we are all chosen! Christ says to us: "Broad is the path that leads to destruction, and many there are that walk thereon." Now what is the reason of this? Osee tells us distinctly enough: "For there is no truth, and there is no mercy, and there is no knowledge of God in the land." (Osee iv. 1.)

Observe the last words: "No knowledge of God in the land." And because this knowledge is wanting we have in our day so many lies, cruelties, enmities, murders, robberies, etc. How could such atrocities take place in the world if people understood what faith teaches, if people knew what God is? Thales, a heathen, in speaking of his gods, said: "The people must consider that the gods see everything and are everywhere present." And why? For "then the people will lead purer lives," said he. When we know what God is we must maintain that the eye of God is everywhere and can see all things, even the most hidden. But either people do not know it or they do not believe, such ungodly lives do some people lead now-a-days!

VII. God is the Only True God.

"And other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it choked it."

SYNOPSIS.—Many are the good seeds that have been sown, but little fruit has resulted. There are many good things among the creatures of God, but the only Supreme Good is God. We all strive for the possession of the very best. Now this supreme good should be one—most perfect. Able to deliver from evil and to bestow all good. It must be sought after for itself only. It must satisfy all, must last forever. Therefore we see that money is not the highest good, neither is wealth. Honors and dignities do not satisfy, neither do sensual pleasures. Knowledge and art fill us with pride and vanity. Virtue itself fails to give lasting peace to the troubled heart. Witness King Solomon. God alone fulfils all the requisite conditions for perfect happiness. Therefore we ought to serve Him perfectly. Have we always done this? If not let us begin now and strive to possess Him that is rich in all things.

How many good seeds have I not sown from this place, and how abundantly have I sown the seed of the word of God in your hearts! But where are the fruits? How many good seeds have I still in preparation to lay during the seed-time of this life in the mysterious ground of your hearts! Will they bear fruit? Not "if they fall amongst thorns," if they fall upon hearts which are full of worldly cares, in which eagerness for wealth, in which avarice and covetousness predominate. And oh! what a pity that the hearts of so many of my hearers should be so overgrown with the thorns of temporal cares, with the perpetual longing for the things of this life, that the seed which is sown cannot grow up and bear fruit! Alas, why do you not strive for those things which alone are real, true, and right! There are many good things here below; everything which God has created is good. Heaven is good, the earth is good, the firmament, the elements, all are good; but yet not the true good. Health is good, life is good, and liberty and honorable station; but none of these is the true good. The same may be said of wealth and happiness and freedom from care; of science and reason, and memory and the numerous arts are good, even of virtue itself. They are all good, but not the chief good.

What then is the true good? I reply with the saints: "Why asketh thou me concerning good? One is good, God." (Matt. xix. 17 and Mark x 18.) Yes, God is the only true good, God is the supreme good.

We must strive after this good, we should love it above all things,

in the enjoyment of it we shall be blessed now and for evermore. I shall now speak of this good, so as to explain better what God is: I ask your careful attention for we are told: "The devil cometh, and taketh the word out of your hearts, lest believing you should be saved." (Luke viii. 12.)

It is natural for man to wish for what is good; indeed, man is not satisfied to strive merely for that which is good, everyone strives for the possession of the very best.

The pagan philosophers wrangled amongst themselves as to what this supreme good is. This man was of opinion that life is best; another thought it is liberty; a third health; a fourth money; a fifth sensual pleasures; a sixth virtue; a seventh wisdom; briefly there were as many opinions as persons. The most intelligent were unanimous regarding the following points: 1. The supreme good could only be one. 2. The supreme good must contain in itself all perfections. 3. It must be sought after for itself alone and for no other reason. 4. It must be capable of delivering from all evil, and of blessing with all good. 5. It must be able to impart itself to all mankind, to be in a manner infinite, so as to satisfy all. 6. Finally it must be of continual duration.

Now, my dear brethren, we shall see if we can find anything upon earth which has all of these requirements.

1. Is it to be found in money and wealth? There are many who say: "Money is the god of this world, money is above everything." But it would be a great mistake if we were to look upon it as the supreme good. For in the first place we do not desire riches on account of gold and silver, which are a shining mass of metal, but because they can satisfy certain desires of the heart. Place a whole bag of money before a hungry person, he cannot enjoy it, a sick person would not become well, an ambitious person would gain no honors, still less would the unchaste satisfy their desires with money. Money is sought for only to procure the means to drive away an evil, or to afford a pleasure. So that wealth does not satisfy us; it rather excites avarice and the desire to have more, bringing worry, restlessness, and discontent in its train. Therefore St. Chrysostom says: "Wealth like poverty must be considered according to the condition of each person. We should not consider a man healthy who suffered continually from thirst, even if he lived in abundance, and dwelt beside rivers and streams; for of what benefit would these waters be if his thirst remained unquenched? It is the same with

the rich. We cannot say that those who thirst for more riches are happy." Gold and silver do not make us virtuous; it is possessed by swindlers, usurers and ne'er-do-weals no less than amongst pious and respectable persons. How then can it be the supreme good?

2. Are high offices, dignities and honors the supreme good?

They are not. For honor consists in the esteem which others have for us; it is therefore more in others than in us, and the proverb is only too true when it says: "Honor is with him whom the other honors." So then honor and respect do not make persons better, but they tend to make man proud and haughty. It often happens that the world worships as its idol a person who is not worthy to dwell upon earth, and who is no more a hero than those idols and statues which the pagans worshipped upon their altars. Thirdly, honors and dignities are insufficient to satisfy our desires and aspirations. For we desire to be permanently happy; but honors and reputation have no stability, and are subject to the humor and discretion of people who are often as inconstant and changeable as a weathercock. How frequently it happens that a few hours destroy the friendship of years! And where does ambition find a limit, when have we honors enough? Alexander possessed half the world, but his ambition was not satisfied. He wept when he heard that there were people on earth who did not acknowledge him as their king. Honors and dignities therefore cannot be the supreme good.

3. What about sensual desires and pleasures? No reasonable person could imagine that they are the highest good, certainly no Christian could. In the first place sensuality degrades men unto the level of the animals, and destroys the order of nature. For instance, nature wishes that the mind as the nobler part of man should rule the body, which is the inferior part. Sensuality, however, subjects the mind to the body and enslaves it to its animal propensities. Secondly, it is foolish to place our whole happiness in that from which we must frequently abstain, if for no other reason than fear of disgrace. Do we not to-day speak of an Epicurus and a Heliogabulus with disgust? They placed their entire happiness in eating and drinking, in obscenity of word and deed. Do we not turn away with aversion from a drunkard? What a disgrace for the unchaste to be found out in their wicked lives!

These sensual pleasures therefore last only a few moments, which are usually followed by a painful repentance, trouble, and dissen-

sions, ensuring enmities, bitter tears, and evils of soul and body. Can then these pleasures and enjoyments be the supreme good?

4. As little can sciences and arts be our supreme good.

For these frequently obscure the mind far more than they educate and perfect it. Many there are who, on account of their learning, become filled with pride, and fall into the greatest errors, sometimes even lose their faith. Besides this we can never bring science or art to the greatest perfection, and the most learned will always have something to learn, even if he lived to be a thousand years old. King Solomon was the wisest of men; but we do not read that his wisdom preserved him from falling deeply into sin.

5. Even virtue itself cannot be called the supreme good. For although it ennobles man and regulates his inclinations, perfects him, and leads him to do good, still it does not raise him above a thousand contrary and sad accidents, with which this life is beset, and which generally afflict those who strive to live virtuous lives. You see, dear brethren, there is nothing upon earth which answers to all the demands, the sum of which may be considered as the supreme good. No mortal has ever yet been truly contented and happy so long as he pursued earthly things. If earth gave perfect bliss would not the aforesaid Solomon have enjoyed it? For forty years he reigned in peace, splendor, and abundance, and enjoyed all things according to his heart's desire. "I built me houses, and planted vineyards: I made gardens and orchards, I heaped together for myself the wealth of kings and provinces: I made me singing men, and singing women, and the delights of the sons of men, cups and vessels to serve to pour out wine; and I withheld not my heart from enjoying every pleasure, and delighting itself in the things which I had prepared. Who shall so feast," he exclaims, "and abound with delights as I?" And yet Solomon found no true happiness in all he possessed and enjoyed. "I saw in all things," he continued, "vanity and vexation of mind, and that nothing was lasting under the sun." (Eccles. ii.) Yes, everything upon earth is vain, except one thing, and that is to love God, and to serve Him alone. God only is worthy of our love; He is the supreme, the greatest good; He it is Who comprehends all good in Himself, Who delivers us from all the troubles of this life; and Who alone can satisfy our desires for happiness; Who lives for ever and always, and Who, on account of His infinite kindness, alone deserves to be served. For He is the only true, infinite, everlasting happiness, in the enjoyment

of which consists all the joy of heaven, all man's salvation, all the delights of the angels and the saints. God and God alone is the supreme happiness. Where, dear brethren, up to the present, have you sought this supreme good? Perhaps in riches and in unjustly acquired goods; in living in such a way as to imperil your immortal soul? or have you sought it in the pleasures of the table, in sensual and animal desires, and converted to your own use the favorite motto of the worldling which says: "Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Or did you seek the supreme good in honors and dignities, in the praises of men and their favor, or in gorgeous display, and splendor of attire? or was it in art or in some handiwork of which you thought more than you did of the honor and service of God?

If so, then you have unfortunately *lost* the supreme, eternal good! Then have you really forsaken the source of living waters, the stream from which everything that is good is drawn, and you have dug cisterns for yourselves which leak, and cannot hold refreshing water. Of a truth, dear brethren, none is good but God alone.

Behold, He is there present to everyone! The most exalted, the supreme good is there expressed for all! It is possible for all to possess in reality this supreme good.

"Why dost thou roam about," exclaims St. Anselm, "what seekest thou so carefully that which is best for body and soul elsewhere? Seek the only real good, in which all good is to be found. Hast thou this, then thou hast all things!"

VIII. Heaven, Angels, Earth.

"And all the people when they saw it gave praise to God."—Luke xviii. 43.

SYNOPSIS.—The people seeing the cure of the blind man praised God. But the creation of the world is a still greater miracle. God created heaven and earth. What is heaven? Answer of St. Augustine. In this place God put the angels. There were nine classes of these heavenly spirits. At times they have taken the form of a body, and have appeared on earth. Many by pride fell away from God and were cast out. God has spared us even after many sins. I shall sin no more. God created the earth, then by His word made "light and separated it from darkness." There will be another separation at the last day. What side shall I be on? Join then with all creatures and praise and glorify God here on earth, and you will merit to be with Him throughout eternity.

Wonderful! The people who accompanied our divine Saviour, saw this one miracle, a blind man restored to sight at the words, "Receive thy sight," and they immediately glorified and praised almighty God. And you, who beheld in the previous instructions not only one miracle, but as many as there are centuries upon the earth, by the light of faith through that all-powerful word: "Let there be," and you who are the faithful have perhaps not spoken one word of praise and thanks to the Almighty. When the six eldest Machabee brothers had suffered death according to the law, and the youngest was being led to the block, his pious mother fearing that the sight of his six slain brothers might intimidate him, and cause him to comply with the law, said to her little son: "My son, I beseech thee, look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them, and consider that God made them out of nothing, and mankind also; so thou shalt not fear this tormentor." (II. Mach. vii. 28.) Heaven and earth is the work of God, He made them out of nothing, but He did not make them all at once. He could have done so, because He is omnipotent, but He did not so wish. For this reason He accomplished His work in six spaces of time, which in the Holy Scripture is described as "days." As the history of the creation as written down by Moses, under the direction of the Holy Ghost in the Book of Genesis, is very instructive and wholesome for us, we will study it in the succeeding lectures, and with this aim we will to-day take as the subject of our consideration

I.

THE WORK OF THE FIRST DAY OF CREATION.

"In the beginning God created heaven and earth." Thus does the author of sacred history begin, and thereby teaches us that before all things God created heaven.

We may now ask the question as to what is understood by this heaven?

St. Augustine and St. Gregory understand thereby that place where God is enthroned in His glory, also that place where no tears are shed, no sorrow is known, no suffering felt, no death is found, only inexpressible delight, incomprehensible bliss and everlasting life. God created this place first of all, and arranged it as the dwell-

ing place of those creatures we call angels, and who were called into existence at the same time that heaven was created. Certainly Moses says nothing of their creation, but his silence is easily explained. Apart from the fact that he only wished to relate the creation of the visible world, he might, as St. Thomas Aquinas believes, not have mentioned the angels here for the reason that he feared the people of Israel, whose inclination for idol worship he felt, would possibly lead them to a superstitious adoration of those angelic beings. That, however, Moses knew of the existence of the angels is apparent because he frequently remembered them. The Jews too believed for the most part that there were angels, and their belief was in nowise erroneous, for Christ the Lord did not describe it as false, on the contrary He Himself often spoke about the angels. Thus we Christians believe that there were angels, and a great number of them. Holy Scripture teaches us this distinctly; it mentions nine classes which we know under the name of the nine choirs of blessed spirits, and they are called angels, archangels, powers, principalities, dominions, sovereignties, thrones, cherubim and seraphim. The names indicate an order of precedence amongst them; at the same time no matter how they may differ in rank they have all one and the same nature. All angels are spirits, therefore have no body. But you will say: Did not angels appear in human form to Abraham, Jacob, Lot, Tobias, the Blessed Virgin, the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, to St. Joseph, to the women at the tomb of Jesus, to St. Peter in the dungeon and to many others?

Certainly, but these forms were not natural to them, not their own, they had only taken them for a time so as to associate visibly with the people to whom God had sent them. This is what the archangel Raphael himself says to the two Tobiases: "I seemed indeed to eat and drink with you; but I use an invisible meat and drink. It is time therefore that I return to Him that sent me." (Tob. xii. 18). The angels are then spirits, pure spirits without a body, but they have reason and free will. In this respect they are far superior to the soul of man. They are then the most beautiful, most exalted, and most superior creatures, and for this reason God has endowed them with numerous natural and supernatural spiritual gifts. Unfortunately for many of them this superiority was a source of arrogance and pride. Lucifer, at the head of a great part of the heavenly hosts, rebelled against God and said:

"I will ascend above the height of the clouds; I will be like the most High." (Is. xiv. 13.)

Alas! how deeply they have fallen who wished to ascend so high! They were thrust out of heaven, and cast into the deepest abyss, into hell. This fall of the rebellious angels is described for us by St. John in his secret revelations. "And there was a great battle in heaven;" he says, "Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And that great dragon was cast out, the old serpent, who is called the devil, and Satan." (Apoc. xii. 7-9.)

So then pride, this single sin made so many thousands of angels unhappy, everlasting miserable. O if we would just think: Miserable creature, dust that I am, I have sinned against God countless times, have sinned not only in thought as the angels did, but in word and in deed. How often could not God have sent his angels to me, to cast me to the evil spirits! I am not worthy that the earth should bear me! And yet God still permits me to live, He has pity on me, gives me opportunities to repent of my sins, holds out His hand to me, to draw me away from the abyss, and to put me in that place which has become empty by the fall of the rebellious angels! Should I not love so good a God from now on? Should I ever again offend so good a God? Woe is me if I misuse this boundless patience and compassion, and if all God's goodness is lost upon me! But no, like the archangel Michael I will combat and fight against those who incite me to rebel against God by sin. Who is like unto God? May this cry of the good faithful angel be my password also in the combat. If the splendor of earthly treasures dazzles and enthralls me I will cry out: Who is like unto God? If quickly fading beauty attracts me, if vanity and pride steal into my heart and cause me to desire empty honors, if sensuality offers me its poisonous cup, then will I cry: Who is like unto God? Yes, my dear Christians, take this exalted word of the faith: Who is like unto God? take it as a shield upon which all the darts of the tempter will fall harmlessly. In the midst of the mire of worldly destruction you will be as pure as an angel, and you will remain unconsumed amidst the fire of the passions, like the three Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace. We will now pass on to the second work of the first day of creation.

II.

In the beginning it says: God created the earth, *i.e.*, that globe upon which we men live. This had not in the beginning the form and arrangement which we now behold. Holy Scripture says: "And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep."

There was at that time upon it neither man nor animal, mountain nor valley, trees nor plants, nor anything whatever. All was chaos, a mixing up of all things without either order or form, and everything was enveloped in an impenetrable darkness. Holy Scripture gives us to understand thereby that the earth was not beautiful and fruitful of its own accord, but that the riches with which it is adorned came from an invisible hand. It teaches us who this invisible dispenser is, when it narrates the following: "And the spirit of God moved over the waters." Like a bird that spreads its wings over its eggs to keep them warm, to give them life, did the Holy Spirit warm the stiff and dead elements to civilization, and vivify them with fruitfulness. For this reason there now began the separation of the elements. And God said: "Let there be light." And light was made. With these omnipotent words the Creator loosened the most subtle of all the elements from the mass, and produced light. Therefore Holy Writ says: "And God divided the light from the darkness. And he called the light Day, and the darkness Night." At this moment, as the holy Fathers think, took place the separation of the angels in heaven, the rebellious ones being cast into utter darkness. Once more, dear brethren, will God undertake a separation of this kind, another dividing, when He will separate through His angels the wheat from the chaff, the just from the sinner, the pious from the ungodly. Then shall he place the former on His right, the latter on His left, then shall He receive the former into heaven and into eternal light, but the latter He will thrust into hell and into everlasting darkness. Let each one ask himself: "If this separation were to take place now with which company should I be found according to my conscience? Amongst the elect, the children of light, or amongst the reprobate, the spirits of infernal darkness? Remember one thing: "If the tree fall to the south, or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be." (Eccles. xi. 3.) As you will one day die, either good or bad, so will you remain for all eternity. "And

there was evening and morning one day," that is to say, the first of the creation of the world.

You have now heard how God created the world in the beginning, you have beheld a new miracle; you have seen heaven and earth, day and night come into existence. Ought you not, therefore, to praise, glorify, and extol God? Listen! Heaven and earth cry out to you and say: *Ipse fecit nos:* "He hath made us." Therefore praise and glorify, not heaven and earth, or what they contain, but Him alone who created both, otherwise you will one day forfeit both, the earth by death, and heaven by guilt, and you will be cast eternally by God into the abyss of hell.

IX. Firmament; Water; Vegetable Kingdom.

"He spoke, and they were made; he commanded and they were created."—Ps. xxxii. 9.

SYNOPSIS.—When the earth was created it lay for a time in disorder; then God, by His almighty power, began the work of order. He divided the firmament from the earth, and separated the waters from the waters. He named the divisions heaven and earth. God made the heavens beautiful that man might not give himself to the vain attractions of the earth. Then the waters at the command of God gathered in one place and forsook the land. How feeble is man when compared with the powerful element, water. How great is the power of God which commands the waters and is obeyed. How often we resist that power by sin. Then God covered the barren earth with beautiful flowers and plants, and trees of all kinds for man's refreshment and use. Have we been grateful for all God's kindness? Give thanks then with all nature to God, our Creator and Best Friend.

WORK OF THE SECOND DAY.

God had finished His first day's work; heaven with its inhabitants was created; the earth with its elements was called into existence; but there lay material still in disorder waiting for the master hand who separated and formed it. Already He had begun the work; the most subtle of all the elements, light, was made. Now further order was to be established. God said: "Let there be a firmament made amidst the waters; and let it divide the waters from the waters. And it was so. And God called the firmament, Heaven; and the evening and morning were the second day."

Dear brethren, look up and behold this miracle of divine power.

As a result of the heat which streamed forth from the luminous matter a part of the waters rose up as mist and fog. This surrounded the earth like a thick mantle, enveloped it in its infancy to a certain extent, as we wrap an infant in swaddling clothes. But this covering was to vanish, and for this purpose the Lord reached into chaos and wrested from it that fluid, aeriform, transparent element the air, through which the water dissolved into mist was driven upwards, the tension of which formed as it were a solid vault which held the upper waters separated from those of the earth. This apparent vault we call the firmament, or more generally the heavens, and we mean thereby that limitless space which is spread over our heads, in which countless planets revolve, that sumptuous canopy which the hand of the Almighty has stretched over the abodes of the children of the earth, painted with the most delicate blue, and adorned profusely as if with glittering jewels. O who amongst us looks up at the heavens on a serene night and does not admire its beauty, and marvel at its immensity? Christian soul, not without a purpose has God made the roof of our dwelling place so glorious and so splendid. Only too readily and too often does man look down, only too willingly does he forget to seek that which is above. This beauty of the heavens, however, and its unlimited space should bring home to him the insignificance and narrowness of the temporal; it should disengage his heart from earth and raise it up to that heaven of which this earthly vision is only a feeble image. "How earth wearies me when I contemplate heaven!" Thus did St. Ignatius frequently exclaim when in the quiet stillness of night he walked about in the garden of the convent and gazed upon the serene firmament. Alas, that we too might be able to read these words in the heavens, that its lovely blue might draw us to hope, and the brilliancy of its stars make us long for that abode of which the Apostle assures us: "Eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those that love Him." But, my dear friends, the firmament above us is not always serene; dark clouds cover it whence lightning flashes and dull thunder rolls below. So is the horizon of our life often covered with gloomy clouds of doubt and despondency, temptations cross one another like lightning through our mind, and a great misfortune shakes our whole being like the roll of thunder. In those dark hours, O Christians, do not give way to despondency; for behold as the

clouds give to the earth a fertilizing rain, and the thunder storm clears the atmosphere, so that the firmament and its luminaries shine the brighter; even so do temptations, sufferings and afflictions serve to enlarge our spiritual views of the next life, to purify our hearts, and to fertilize them for the accomplishment of greater good.

WORK OF THE THIRD DAY.

1. Although the waters had risen so much on high, yet there still remained such quantities upon the earth that everything was inundated. Then God said: "Let the waters that are under the heaven be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear. And it was so done." The word was hardly uttered before it was fulfilled. Terrified the waters took to flight and seemed in readiness not only to forsake the land, but even to depart from out of the universe, so great was the speed with which they executed the command which they had received. What power is here revealed to us! Alas, how weak and helpless is man compared to this wild, tumultuous element. To keep a small river within its bounds so that it may not overflow the meadows and pastures, and render the roads impassable, man builds with much trouble and labor and at tremendous expense dikes and canals, and yet how frequently the water mocks at the bounds which have been set to it? But not so with God. He required no dikes, no precautionary means; the one word: "Let the waters be gathered together in one place" was sufficient to divide the boundless ocean, the rivers and streams from the land, to separate them and to rule them according to His will. Indeed God holds the immense bulk of water of the ocean within its bounds. He forbade the sea ever to leave its bed, and it has obeyed for 6,000 years. It drives its waters indeed at God's command twice daily from the centre to the edge that it may remain in constant motion and not become stagnant; it is often tossed about by storms so that the waves raise up mountain high and threaten to swallow up the entire land. But the grains of sand upon the shore curb the waters and force them back, calling upon them in the name of God: "Hitherto thou shalt come, and shalt go no further; and here thou shalt break thy swelling waves." (Job xxxviii. 11.)

2. The water was separated and dammed, and the dry appeared. And God called it the dry land. But this bare, withered and barren

surface God in His sovereignty and benevolence wished to clothe with a suitable garment. Therefore He said: "Let the earth bring forth the green herb, and such as may seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind which may have seed in itself upon the earth. And it was so done." The earth was at once covered with the most fruitful and delightful green, millions and millions of herbs, and grasses, and flowers appeared resplendent in such profusion and in such a variety of colors and radiance that man did not know which most to marvel at, the ability or the richness of the Divine artist's brush. And what is still more wonderful is that all these creatures, no matter how tender and perishable their nature, have remained through all the centuries, and have propagated themselves independently of human help. God pledged His word for their preservation, and so they are to-day as they were in the beginning. There they grow continually without sowing or care. How sad and withered would our meadows and fields, our hills and valleys look if we had to sow and plant them ourselves? The heavenly Father has delivered us from this care, He looks after them Himself. A number of plants He forms partly for our pleasure and partly for our use. For all plants delight our eyes and sense of smell, either by the splendor of their colors or their wonderful formation, and by their delicious perfume; or they are food and remedies for us and the animals that serve us. It is for this reason that we see the vegetable world so wonderfully increased in the pastures, for these are in reality the storehouses for the use of living beings. Still the Creator not only adorned the earth with green fields, sweet smelling flowers, wholesome herbs and nourishing plants, He caused trees of all kinds to grow. Some of these were to provide us with wood, drugs, coloring matters, and so forth; others were to give us fruit for food and refreshment. The fruit trees are distributed as climate and other local circumstances render their production necessary and advantageous for mankind. In this temperate climate we have many such trees. You know them and have often tasted of them. But did you always do so with gratitude? The tree whose branches are borne down to the ground under the weight of its ripe fruit should certainly remind us of this. "Learn of me," He says as it were, "learn of me how great the goodness of the Lord is Who made me for you. Neither for Him nor for myself am I so rich. He wants nothing, and I should not know how to make use of His

gifts. Bless Him forever! Thank Him, and since He has made me the servant of your pleasures, you will become the servants of my gratitude."

My dear brethren, do not take your place amongst the ungrateful; say your grace before and after meals assiduously and devoutly, and praise always the goodness of the Almighty Creator.

X. Divine Providence.

SYNOPSIS.—The providence of God made up of His wisdom and love. By this attribute, God, a. Gives what is necessary; b. Removes what is harmful; c. Directs all things to their proper end. Therefore, 1. All that God sends us is for our benefit, either here or hereafter; 2. We do wrong in opposing the will of God; 3. We should have the utmost confidence in God. Confidence in God, exemplified by Abraham's consent to sacrifice his son Isaac. Confidence in God, strengthened by God's words to St. Catherine of Sienna. Conclusion: Trust God in all circumstances.

The object of the lesson to-day is to endeavor to have you understand what Divine Providence is.

Divine Providence, as St. Thomas Aquinas says, is nothing else but that most perfect knowledge and wisdom of God which puts everything that is outside of God in proper order, according to number, measure and weight, and leads it to its destination, together with His fatherly and benevolent disposition to give to each creature the proper means by which it may attain its end and aims, and therefore its happiness.

1. By this all-wise and all-benevolent Providence God preserves everything He has created, by giving on the one hand to each creature everything that is necessary for its natural condition, and on the other keeping away from it as long as he wishes everything that is hurtful and detrimental to it.

2. By this Providence God conducts and directs everything in heaven and on earth, big or little, important or insignificant, in such a way that it may attain its end.

It follows therefore that: *a.* God cannot err in His disposition of things, as so frequently happens with man, because He is led in all things by His Providence, which is connected with that infinite

wisdom which knows everything most thoroughly, and which can never err; *b.* that all God ordains for us, be it health or sickness, life or death, good or bad, hard or easy, must be for our benefit, because all His dispensations emanate from His infinite love for us, which causes Him to aid us to obtain our aim and end, *i.e.,* eternal salvation.

If this is clear, so also is the fact that we deceive ourselves and find ourselves doing a great wrong as soon as we oppose the order of things established by God, for by this we are striving to undo God's will.

If then, we, as Catholic Christians, believe that God knows, recognizes and foresees everything, that He governs and maintains everything; that He has the power and will to help all, and that He as "our loving Father" cannot wish anything which may be harmful to us, it should be our most sacred duty to confide in His Providence and rely on it thoroughly, with the full conviction that we by ourselves can obtain nothing better than what God's wisdom ordains for us.

Holy Scripture gives us a beautiful example of this firm confidence in Divine Providence in Abraham. The promise had been made to him that his descendants should be multiplied as the stars of the firmament, and that in his seed all races should be blessed. Then the command of God was issued to him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. That might have shaken his confidence, for how could the promise be fulfilled if he was obliged to kill his only son? Abraham, however, was accustomed to execute the Divine Will without opposition, so he took his son Isaac, placed a bundle of wood upon the shoulders of the boy, and started for the sacrifice. As they were walking along, the boy said, with childish forethought: "My dear father, we have fire and wood, but where is the victim to be sacrificed?" How profoundly must these words have stirred the father's loving heart! Every word was as an arrow which pierced the father's heart! Still, Abraham, compliant to the will of God, and relying with unshaken confidence upon His Providence, suppressed every feeling of anguish and answered: "The Lord will provide," as if he would say: "My child, do not be solicitous about the sacrifice. We will only strive to accomplish the will of God and obey His decrees; the Lord will choose the victim for Himself." And the Lord did choose it Himself. Just as Abraham drew the sword and was about to strike his son an angel

of the Lord appeared to him and said: "Lay not thy hand upon the boy, neither do thou anything to him; now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for My sake. Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw behind his back a ram amongst the briers sticking fast by the horns, which he took and offered for a holocaust instead of his son." (Gen. xxii. 12.) O, may you, who in every trouble and trifling misfortune are so depressed and discouraged, never forget those words, "The Lord will provide." If you are poor and forsaken, suffering want and poverty; if you have not a crust of bread or a cent of money: do not on that account be tempted to an injustice, have confidence! The Lord will provide! That hand which clothes the lilies of the field, and feeds and preserves the beasts of the forests, the fish in the water and the birds of the air, who has supported you for so many years, will continue to provide the necessary support for you. If you are persecuted, calumniated, and used despitefully, if no one will associate with you and all turn their back upon you, if no one will protect and help you, be of good heart, "the Lord will provide," if only you have Him for a friend and know how to preserve His friendship.

If you have a large family but small means, and you sometimes know not how to manage for your children, be consoled: "the Lord will provide" for them. Bring them up well, piously, obediently, and in the fear of God, that they may live in grace before Him.

Are you sick and miserable, blind, lame, or a cripple, do you lie upon a bed of suffering, and no one comes to bring you help and assistance; only be pious and patient, "the Lord will provide," and if not in this world, most certainly in heaven above. Are you a poor laboring man, earning your bread by the sweat of your brow, and bending beneath the weight of hard work, do not curse or blaspheme on that account, "the Lord will provide;" you will not die of starvation.

A holy man has said that although God carries all things in His hands, He holds particularly in His hands three keys, which He always takes charge of and will entrust to no one. The first is the key to the wind, rain, snow, hail, lightning, thunder and hurricanes. The second opens the graves and permits the dead to leave their sepulchres. The third opens the vast storeroom where everything that is necessary for the support of mankind, and above all, for the poor, is to be found in abundance. You can rely upon this,

dear Christian, and be assured that God will feed and care for you if you will only commit yourself to His Providence. "My child," the Saviour once said to His beloved spouse St. Catherine of Sienna, "think of Me, then I shall think of and care for thee." If all men were to do this, everyone would certainly be provided for in the best way. But our spirit of pride, our will which is ever ready to oppose itself to the dispensations of God; that mean distrust, the faint-heartedness and want of faith with which we withdraw ourselves from His protection; our unlawful, sinful lives, whereby we render ourselves unworthy of His protection: these are what close against us God's generous hand, and shut out the stream of His graces. But henceforth we will rely with unshaken confidence upon the all-governing Providence of the Lord and commit ourselves to it with perfect resignation. Then let God see to our preservation; we on our part have nothing to trouble about. For He has said: "Think thou only of Me, then will I think and take care of thee.' In this way can we live on in peace, without care; and my wish for you to-day is, "May such peace be with you."

XI. God, the Preserver and Ruler.

SYNOPSIS.—I. God's complaint through Osee. This complaint a very just one.

II. Necessity of preservation by God, shown, 1. By the nothingness of world. 2. By examples: a. Pendulum; b. Water of mill; c. Ship without pilot.

III. This preservation is: 1. Mighty; 2. Universal; 3. Wise; 4. Loving.

IV. This preservation is shown even by affliction.

V. Place all confidence in God.

I.

Through the mouth of the Prophet Osee, God bursts forth into this sorrowful complaint: "And I was like a foster-father to Ephraim: I carried them in my arms: and they knew not that I healed them." (Osee xi. 3.)

This complaint over ingratitude is very natural. It is a great grief to a father when his unworthy, wayward child does not acknowledge his paternal care and support, or pays little heed or respect to the father who cares for him. But, my dear brethren! if we look around us now and observe how men live upon earth,

and how they behave towards God in the course of their lives, must we not admit sorrowfully that either they do not know Him by whom they are preserved, cared for, and supported, or that they do not wish to acknowledge God's blessings? In truth it is not surprising if God repeats his lamentation, and now says of Christians: "I am like a foster-father to all men, I have carried them in my arms as a loving father would his little child, but few of them know that I care for them." We, at least, to whom this is said, ought to live always in grateful remembrance that God preserves and cares for us every moment. For "it is far more," says St. Augustine, for God to preserve the world in its existence than for Him to have created it and called it into existence.

Or rather, "what would it have availed us that God should have created the earth and us men, if He had immediately withdrawn His hand from us, and have allowed us to pull back into that nothingness from whence we came?" What good does it do if a potter forms a vessel out of clay, if a sculptor fashions a beautiful statue, if an artist paints a picture, what good is it, I say, in case the potter breaks his vessel to pieces on the spot, the sculptor destroys his statue, the artist obliterates his colors? It would be the same as if neither the vessel, nor the statue, nor the picture had ever been made! However, the world has been in existence almost six thousand years, and for this length of time men have lived upon earth. To whom can we, and ought we, attribute this but to God who has preserved us? "Thou hast formed me," says the Psalmist, "and laid Thy hand upon me." This means, as the learned Cardinal Bellarmine explains: "Thou hast made man, O Lord, and after having made him, Thou didst not forsake him, as other artists do when they have finished their task, but Thou layest Thy hand upon man to lead him, to preserve and, as it were, to carry him in Thy hand. Otherwise man would fall back into dust, or rather into nothingness."

Remove the pendulum from the works of a clock only for a moment and they stop immediately. Turn off the water-course from a mill, or stop its supply, and at once the motion of the wheel will cease, the whole mill will be at a standstill. Launch a well equipped boat with sails, oars, etc., upon the high seas, but place no man at the helm to conduct its course, and it will be tossed hither and thither, become the sport of the winds and waves, finally be wrecked and go to pieces. Not even a little log hut can

last long without the care of a master's hand; first the roof, then the flooring, at another time the walls, are damaged by the weather, by rain, cold, etc., and they have to be repaired or rebuilt. How is it possible, then, that this vast universe—heaven and earth, with everything that they contain—could have lasted so many thousands of years if the hand of God had not preserved it? If God were to withdraw His hand even for a moment we should return into the abyss of our nothingness. For this reason, therefore, it is our duty to thank the Lord every moment, and to implore Him never to withdraw His mighty hand from us.

If one of you were to be let down by a rope from the top of this church, and you feared that he who was holding you up would let the rope slip from his hands, how earnestly would you not beg of him for God's sake to hold the rope tight! Now reflect that we are all in much greater danger than a person suspended by a rope from a great height. For God could preserve us, even if others would let us fall; but he from whom God withdraws His hand, cannot be saved from destruction, either by an angel, or by man, or by the whole world put together.

Thus does God preserve the universe and everything within it. "For He made the little and the great, and He hath equally care of all." (Wis. vi. 8.)

II.

But how does He preserve, conduct and rule all this? To this Holy Scripture replies in the same Book of Wisdom: "The wisdom and providence of God reaches from end to end mightily, and orders all things sweetly." (Wis. viii. 1.) Divine wisdom therefore reaches from one end of creation to the other in all things; it extends from the highest heavens to the deepest abyss; from the most beautiful and highest of the angels to the smallest worm crawling in the dust, and His orders befall each one, even as the Holy Ghost says:

1. "Mightily," that is to say so strong, so powerfully, and with such authority that no creature in heaven or upon earth is able to withstand God's arrangements. "There is no counsel against the Lord," says Solomon. (Prov. xxi. 30.) No power, no cunning, no force, no malice, no plans, no matter how well thought out, can work against God's orders. If the power, wisdom and ability of

all kings and queens, princes and nobles, priests and laymen, all physicians and jurists, were to be united, they could not prevent the very least thing from happening which God has decreed. Sooner, indeed, as God has Himself said, will heaven and earth pass away than that a single letter of His Word shall be altered.

Foolish, therefore, are those persons who oppose God's decrees by force, or curse, deride and complain when God visits them with sickness, poverty, crosses and sufferings. All complaints are in vain! for God does all things as He pleases, and as He knows in His unerring wisdom, that all will be for His glory and our salvation, with a power and authority that nothing can prevent. But because He is not only our Lord and Master, but our Father also, and to His awful power unites His infinite goodness and love, behold, my friends, He not only arranges all things mightily, but also,

2. Lovingly. For it is love that leaves us our free will in all His arrangements, so that what He decrees for us in His power becomes meritorious for us, and by these thoughts, crosses and sufferings are made easier to bear. Yes, it is out of love that He does not ordain for us that which would surpass our strength, which would be too much or too difficult for us. "For God is a faithful master," says the Apostle, who does not burden us with more than we can bear, and even temptations (or sufferings) become profitable to us.

Thus he allowed Joseph to be sold by his brethren, and through Putiphar to be thrown into prison, to exalt him afterwards to the governorship of all Egypt. He permitted Moses to be laid by his mother in a basket of rushes in the water, that in this way he might be discovered by Pharao's daughter and be brought up at court to be the leader and redeemer of his people. Thus did He allow the chaste Susanna to be condemned to death, so as to make known her virtue to the people as a shining example, to unmask her false accusers and to deliver them up to justice. Thus did He permit His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die a disgraceful death upon the cross, that through Him all mankind be redeemed, and that He might be made judge over the living and the dead.

In the same way God inflicts the direst poverty upon some people who otherwise would go to hell with the rich glutton, that they may one day attain to the kingdom of heaven: for, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He permits others to be persecuted, reviled, insulted; others to be tor-

tured or killed, to save their souls; for, "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake." He abandons some to a continual sickness in order to preserve their souls strong and healthy; others He calls out of this life by an early death "so that with increasing age their pure hearts may not be hurt by evil." Briefly we can say with the Psalmist: "All the ways of the Lord in which He leads all created things to their end, are a proof of His mercy and truth." (Ps. xxiv.)

This is the manner in which God preserves the world, conducts and rules it. If then, He orders everything upon earth with power and love, "Cast all your solicitude upon Him; for He hath care of you." (I. Pet. v. 7.)

He knows best what is harmful or profitable for you, and He can only wish that which can be of use to you and tend to your salvation. Be assured, therefore: that as long as God rules above, everything upon this earth will be well ordered.

XII. The First Man.

"And you shall praise the name of the Lord your God, who hath done wonders with you."—Joel ii. 26.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Mode of creation: Not "Let there be," but, "Let us make."
II. What is man? a. Crown epitome of creation. Microcosm. b. Lord of world. Some power over creatures lost, but much remains. Lesson: Not to bring ourselves down to level of the beasts. c. Image of God; spiritual; eternal; free; conscious; ubiquitous; powerful; capable of holiness. d. Heir of heaven. Able to look upwards. e. Partaker in divine nature. Power over the world; over devils; over human life; over happiness of others; over ministry of angels.
III. Conclusion: Preserve consciousness of dignity. Imitate Christ.

God had created the world and arranged it perfectly. He Himself cast a look of scrutiny upon it and found that everything was good. Yet there was something wanting, and to produce this the Omniscient retired into Himself, considered and took counsel with Himself. What was it to be? Listen! for according to His mysterious counsel He said: "Let us make"! Remarkable! why is it not as formerly: "Let there be"? "Let there be light"! "Let there be a firmament"! "Let the waters be gathered together"! "Let the earth bring forth green herb"! "Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven"! "Let the waters bring forth fish"! "Let

the earth bring forth the living creature in its kind, cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth according to their kinds"! Thus spake God formerly: why did he now change His speech? Who is the extraordinary being that is now to appear? Know then, dear brethren, this being is ourselves, this creature is man! God Himself said it: "Let us make man"! What a miraculous work then man must be! Let us to-day consider this wonderful creature more closely, and for this purpose answer the question of the Psalmist:

"What is man"?

To this question I reply:

1. Man is the crown of the visible creation. For of what other creatures do we read that the Triune God took counsel beforehand with Himself so as to bring it forth? Upon what work did God, as it were, personally lay His hands to create it? This did not happen with the creatures of heaven, nor with those of earth, but only with man. "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth," says Holy Writ, "and breathed into his face the breath of life." (Gen. ii. 7.) Man is consequently the most excellent being of the visible creation, he is the most perfect work of the infinitely wise Master; he is the greatest miracle of the Almighty between heaven and earth; he is the chosen vessel of Divine goodness; in him the Divine power, wisdom and goodness are in a certain measure exhausted. Man is the keystone of God's works; he is the last link in the chain of creatures; he is the bond between the corporeal and spiritual worlds, the abridgment of all created things. We can say with St. Gregory Nazianzen: "Man is a world in miniature." For "he exists with the stones, lives with the plants, grows wtih the trees, feels with the animals, understands and knows with the angels."

As St. Ambrose very beautifully expresses it: "It is right that man should appear at the end of the history of creation, as the last of the created works; for he is the sum, the abridgment of the whole of creation. As a matter of fact, God has united the spiritual and the material world in man, and stamped the universe upon him, neatly and in miniature. And like a lord who walks through his garden, seeking the most beautiful flowers wherewith to make a nosegay for his delight, God has taken the best of every creature and therefrom made man for His pleasure."

Who amongst you can hear this without feeling exalted in the

consciousness of his own dignity? "Man! wouldst thou know the dignity of thy nature?" writes St. Basil, "then read the history of thy origin." Thou didst not hear concerning any other creatures the words: "Let us make." Know then thy worth, and I would add, love Him who has granted thee this worth; for thereby, says St. Ambrose, "God wished nothing but to draw man to Himself, and to enkindle their love."

Secondly, to the question: "What is man"? I reply: Man is the lord of the whole world, the master over all creatures, which God created first so as to surrender them to man that he might rule over them. For thus it is written: "Let us make man, and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth." Certainly man is created to be king, and Adam, before his rebellion against God, exercised undisputed sway over the whole of nature. After his fall this power was certainly greatly limited, but even now man stills holds a great part of his original power, and shows himself thereby to be the ruler of the world. Does he not force the earth to bring forth fruits of different kinds? Are not the animals subject to him to obey his wishes? Does not the water have to turn his mills and bear his ships? Has not the fire to finish his tools, and set his machinery in motion? Do not metal, stone, wood, earth, form themselves into figures according to his will? Surely man is king over the other visible creatures; in spite of his fall, he still has a great amount of that power which was given to him by these exalted words: "He shall have dominion over the animals and over the whole earth." Therefore, St. Basil exclaims: "O man! thou wast created to be a ruler! Why then dost thou serve thy ungovernable animal desires and subject thyself to sin, like the meanest of slaves?" Unfortunately man did not know how to appreciate his worth, and instead of ruling over creatures, he has placed himself alongside the unreasoning animals and become like unto them!

Thirdly, to the question "What is man"? I answer: Man is the living image of God. As an artist considers and studies carefully the features of a person whose portrait he is going to make, so did God, as it were, look upon Himself and thus stamp His Divine features upon man, saying: "Let us make man to our image and likeness." To understand what a wonderful resemblance exists between God and man, I shall draw attention to a few things.

You know that God is a pure spirit, single in nature, threefold in person; so, too, the human soul is a spiritual and indivisible being, possessing three superior powers: Understanding, memory and will.

God is eternal; the soul likewise is immortal. God is free; man also has a free will, which cannot be obliged to do anything. God is omniscient; the soul of man, too, has the power of knowledge, is capable of divine and earthly wisdom, forms ideas, and discriminates discreetly.

God is omnipresent; our soul likewise is in every part of the body, which is a mysterious model of the universe, and it can transport itself in a moment to the remotest places, to the most exalted heights, and into the deepest abysses.

God is the Lord of heaven and earth; man is likewise the ruler over much of his surroundings.

God is the end and aim of all creatures; all corporal things refer to man in a certain sense, because for his sake the Infinite made the world. (Ps. lxxxi.)

God is holy and just: so was Adam's soul before his fall, and so, too, is the soul of everyone who is born again of water and of the Holy Ghost.

See then, Christians! we are in truth images of God; but who thinks of it? Alas, how many disfigure and defile this glorious image within them!

Fourthly, let us ask further with David: "What is man"? And St. Paul answers: "An heir of heaven, and co-heir with Christ." For this reason God gave man a straight, upright body, a look uplifted, so that he could gaze up to heaven, and not, like all the animals, down towards the earth. And yet men are pleased with earthly, rather than heavenly things; they seek only money and possessions, and pleasures, and good-cheer, and forget to aspire after that which is above. They sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, for a drop of honey, and for lesser things. Alas, fools that they are! The time is not far off when, like Esau, they will cry over the loss of their birthright, and complain, with Jonathan, that they have eaten death, eternal death.

Let us ask finally, fifth: "What is man"? And God Himself answers by the Prophets: "Ye are gods upon earth," for you have received from Me a divine power. You can invent, experiment with and rearrange the powers of nature; you can bind, banish, and drive

out the devil; you can open heaven to yourself and others, and remit all sins, even when their number cry to heaven; you can dispense the divine graces to others; with a few words you can draw down God Himself from heaven. I gave you the power to kill, to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to work miracles, even greater ones than Christ Himself performed. "Behold, then, O man! to what dignity God has exalted us, since He has given us so great a power." (St. Chrysos.)

"Know then, O man!" I would exclaim with the saintly Leo, "know thy exalted dignity, and as thou hast been made a partaker in the Divine nature, do not cast thyself down from this eminence into the deep, into an untimely misery, by a shameful mode of living!"

This is sufficient for to-day, dear brethren, about the masterpiece of the Creator, the crown of creation, man. Meanwhile "praise the name of the Lord thy God and Creator, who has done such wonders unto thee." Praise in particular Christ the Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost created thee. Thou who wert annihilated by sin, He has raised up to a new life by His death, and restored in thee by His passion, the ruined and demolished image of God.

XIII. Destiny of the Angels.

"The angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear him, and shall deliver them."—Ps. xxxiii. 8.

SYNOPSIS.—I. a. God's rest on the seventh day. Not through weariness, nor for idleness. b. Sanctification of Sabbath. We must consecrate that day to God.

II. Purpose of the angels. a. Service of God. 1. To sing His praises. Testimony of Isaias. Of John. Example to us. David. The three children. 2. Messengers to men. Meaning of name. Jacob. Patriarchs. St. John. Lot. Blessed Virgin. St. Joseph. St. Peter. The call to judgment. Lesson: Give willing service to God. b. Service of man. Our guardians. Their condescension. Our ingratitude.

III. Resolution: Not to drive them away by sin.

"The angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear Him, and shall deliver them." (Ps. xxxiii. 8.)

"And on the seventh day God ended his work, which he had made: and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which

he had done. And he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

Thus does Holy Scripture conclude the history of the creation of heaven and earth and sets before us at the end yet another series of beautiful mysteries.

1. "God rested," says Holy Writ; that means, He left off creating anything, not from fatigue, as is the case with us after working hard, when our limbs become tired and weakened, for God had created everything out of nothing without trouble or labor by His almighty "Let there be." O if I could do this! many unwilling day laborers and many lazy servants will think to themselves, O if I could only do this! What would I not give if I could do my work by merely looking at it, instead of having to take so much trouble and pains! And why would you like this? Is it not in order that you might idle away your time, roam listlessly about, and have more time to gossip? But no, this may never be: for "in the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread, until thou return to the earth from whence thou comest." (Gen. iii.) There thou wilt be able to rest, but now it is: "those who will not work, cannot eat either."

2. "God rested on the seventh day," *i.e.*, upon the Sabbath, which "He has blessed and sanctified." (Gen. ii. 2.) He desired therewith that Adam and all his descendants should celebrate this day solemnly, abstain from all work, and spend the day in holy rest to the glory of God and in thanksgiving for the graces and benefits of the creation of the world. This He expressly commanded later on: "Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day," says the third commandment. The Sabbath was with the Jews the seventh day of the week, but in the new law the celebration of the Sabbath as changed by Christ and His Apostles to the Sunday.

It is really a shame that whilst God has given us so many days and hours for our temporal affairs, and out of so many claims only one for Himself and His service we men should actually wish to take this one day from the Lord! If we were to pray day and night, early and late, without ceasing, to thank God for the blessing of creation, yet would this not be enough. How ungrateful then are those who do not want to devote one day to the glory of God. We ought not to be surprised that in spite of all their efforts such persons do not prosper; God will not and cannot bless a work which is undertaken against His express prohibition.

But now that everything is created: angels, men, animals, fish, birds, plants, flowers and trees; the sun, moon and stars; air, fire, water and earth; now, I would like to ask: To what purpose is all this? For what purpose are the angels? Men? For what purpose the rest of creatures?

This is a very important question, dear brethren, which we should ponder without intermission; for thereon depends much, very much, everything, in fact, that pertains to our eternal salvation. I shall answer these questions in the course of these instructions, and shall proceed at once to the answering of the first question:

For what purpose are the angels created?

I. For the service of God.

II. For the service of mankind.

I.

We know already that the angels are pure spirits, having understanding and free will, but no body. We know also that God has adorned and distinguished these spirits with special gifts. Unfortunately many of them, as we have heard, became proud of their advantages, and on that account were cast into the abyss of hell; however, the greater part of the created spirits remained faithful to the Lord, and as a reward for their fidelity, they are now so strengthened in good, that they can never fall away from it through all eternity. They stand evermore with and around God as the first ministers and courtiers of the King of kings, the Lord of lords, reigning Prince of heaven and earth, and there they behold God in His glory, adore Him, and sing His praises.

1. This then is their first, and at the same time their most blissful destiny before God. The Prophet Isaias saw the angels assembled around the throne of the Almighty, and heard them sing in alternate chorus: "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts; all the earth is full of His glory." (Is. vi. 3.) The Evangelist St. John, too, saw them standing around the throne of God, and he heard their song of praise, which they sang day and night whilst offering up the most precious incense. "Amen, Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and strength to our God, for ever and ever. Amen." (Apoc. vii. 12.) The angels then praise and extol the Lord God without ceasing. O would that we could do as they do! But alas! our prayer is too often rather an insult than a glorifying of God; we are so inconstant

and absent-minded at it, so little devout and so very lukewarm. Well, now, let us do as David did, and the three youths in the fiery furnace, who called upon the heavenly spirits to help them, crying aloud: "Bless the Lord, all ye his angels: you that are mighty in strength . . . bless the Lord, all ye His hosts!" (Ps. cii. 20.) "O ye angels of the Lord, bless the Lord! Praise and exalt Him above all for ever!" (Dan. iii. 58.)

2. The angels have still another duty to perform for God. When the patriarch Jacob in his flight from his angry brother Esau, had to pass the night in the open, he saw in a dream, a ladder which reached from heaven down to the earth, and upon which the angels ascended and descended.

In this vision, my dear brethren, you have the second vocation of the blessed spirits; they serve namely, to maintain the connection between heaven and earth, they are God's messengers to the visible world, they are the ambassadors of God, to announce and reveal to mankind His will, and execute His commands. Hence their name angel; for angel means messenger, ambassador. This we find confirmed in Holy Scripture. We read there, that God spoke to many patriarchs and prophets. Now, God did not speak to them in His own Person, but by the angels; they spoke in His stead, and represented Him. We can perceive this plainly in the nineteenth and twenty-second chapters of the Apocalypse of St. John. When, for instance, an angel appeared to this Disciple of fervent charity, and unfolded to him the most secret mysteries, St. John fell upon his knees and wanted to worship him, supposing that it was God Himself who was speaking to him. But the angel rebuked him for this by saying: "Do it not, I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Adore God." It was two angels also that God sent to Lot at Sodom with the message that he should flee from the city hurriedly with all his relations, because God was going to destroy that city by fire on account of its iniquities. An angel came at the command of God to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to announce to her the Incarnation of the Son of God. An angel came to St. Joseph in a dream and exhorted him to flee while it was yet night, into Egypt, with Mary and the Infant, because Herod sought the Child's life. An angel, too, descended from heaven to the garden of olives, to aid the suffering Saviour, and to hand Him the chalice of consolation.

The angels therefore are really God's messengers who proclaim

and execute His commands. And in what way do they do this? The Psalmist tells us: "Thou makest thy angels spirits, and thy ministers a burning fire." (Ps. ciii. 4.) Observe well these words: Wind and fire! The first is a symbol of rapidity, the second a symbol of joy and strength. Accordingly the angels accomplish the commissions given them by God, quickly, joyfully, and perfectly. We ought also to accomplish the Divine Will after their example; for Jesus Himself taught us to pray: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." But how often, O Christian, hast thou said these words, and how seldom were they from thy heart? Make amends, now, and serve God with the angels upon earth, so that thou also mayest be permitted one day to serve Him in heaven.

II.

The angels were also created for the service of man. They have the vocation to serve us, to protect us, to preserve us, to lead us, to instruct us, to assist us in life and death, and after death, before the judgment-seat of God. "For God has given His angel charge over thee," says David, "that he may protect thee in all thy ways;" yes, even to leading thee by the hand lest thou shouldst hurt thyself and go to perdition. This is the end and aim for which God has created the angels in such vast numbers, that they exceed the stars of the firmament, so that everyone may have his own guardian angel, who is his protector from the cradle unto the grave, and even into the other world. What a blessing! What a grace! What a happiness for us! The Lord God sends His beautiful angels to us miserable men, made of slime and earth, that they may protect, lead, and guide us on our way! But do we bless Him for this? Do we thank Him, and praise Him, do we exhibit a holy reverence for His angel? Alas, why do I speak of praise and gratitude, whilst so many do not even allow him to walk peacefully by their side, but, with unremitting blows of daily sins drive him away! For it is certain that the angels have a greater horror of sin than we have of a grewsome corpse. How many of you have caused your guardian angel to turn away from you, even forced him perhaps to go away altogether! For the exhalation of sin and the pestilential breath of vice, anger and sin, drive away the holy guardian angels. May every soul, therefore, purify itself from the rottenness and bad odor of sin in the Sacrament of Penance, and then obey the exhortation of God: "Take notice of him (the angel) and obey his voice." (Exod. xxiii. 21.)

XIV. The Mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity.

I.

SYNOPSIS.—I. What is this mystery?
II. Impossible for us to understand.
III. Its reasonableness can be shown from similitudes: a. youth before a mirror; b. sun shining on mirror and glancing from there to the surface of body of water; c. sun, in its nature, its light and its heat; d. the human soul with its three powers: will, memory, understanding.
IV. Accept what faith teaches us.
V. Keep holy our souls, the image of the Triune God.

As true as it is that there is only one God, so true is it also that this one God is threefold in person. "For there are three that give testimony in heaven," St. John writes; "the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One." (I. John v. 7.) That is to say, one God. According to these words which the Holy Ghost taught the Disciples, God is one and threefold, one in Divinity and threefold in Person. It is, therefore, true that God is the Father, God is the Son, and God is the Holy Ghost.

And yet the Father is no other God than the Son and the Holy Ghost; the Son is no other God than the Father and the Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost is no other God than the Father and the Son, although the Father differs in Person from the Son and the Holy Ghost; the Son differs in Person from the Father and the Holy Ghost; and the Holy Ghost differs in Person from the Father and the Son—the Father is the first, the Son the second, and the Holy Ghost is the third Person.

But how can we comprehend this union of three Persons in One God? It is a mystery and cannot be understood, nor perfectly expressed in words. Nevertheless many holy theologians of the Church have made use of various comparisons in order, as far as possible, to help us to understand something of this mystery. "Imagine to yourselves," says Andrew of Creta, "a fine large mirror hanging upon the walls of a room. Before it stands a youth of exquisite form, looking at himself and beholding how well everything becomes him. By this view the youth obtains an exact image of himself, so that now there are two of the same figures present, one before, the other in the mirror. As the youth sees the beauty of his image, he feels his heart inflamed with love for an object whose

beauty inspires love. In this we notice three things, distinct one from another: first the youth, who beholds himself in the mirror; secondly, his image which is in the mirror; thirdly, the love for himself which is awakened in the youth by the consideration of the likeness produced."

In like manner we can in a measure make the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity comprehensible, says the same writer. As the heavenly Father has from all eternity beheld Himself with the eye of His spirit in the mirror of His Being, He produced therein the most perfect likeness of His Divinity. And this image is the Son, who is there called "a mirror without spot, the image, the form of the Father." As the Father recognized this infinitely perfect likeness, He was inflamed with love for it, and this love is the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son. Accordingly there are three in the Godhead: first, the Father; secondly, the Image or the Son; thirdly, the Love or the Holy Ghost. In this manner you can imagine to yourselves how God can be threefold in Person. But how these three Persons can be one God, that I will also strive to represent to you in a sensible manner. Imagine again a mirror held towards the sun, near the surface of a sheet of water, so that the sun shines upon the mirror and at the same time casts its radiance from the mirror upon the surface of the water. In this way you would see three suns at once: one in the heavens, one in the mirror, one in the water. The first has light in itself; the second in the mirror has its light from the first; the third in the water has the light from the first and second, and yet there is only one sun. Thus are there three in the Most Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father is of Himself, the Son from the Father, the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, and yet all three are only one in the splendor and glory of their Divinity.

St. Cyril of Alexandria finds in the sun a very appropriate image to make the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity as far as possible evident to us. "In the sun," he says, "we find very distinctly three things: (1), the natural light which makes up its nature; (2), the rays of light with which it illumines heaven and earth; (3), the heat whereby it produces wonderful operations upon earth. So," continues the holy theologian, "there are three in the Godhead: the Father, who is the Sun in its nature; the Son, who is the rays of light of the world and proceeds from the Father; and the Holy Ghost, who is that fire of love and proceeds from the Father and

the Son. In the same way that the sun does not proceed from any other sun, so does the Father proceed from none other; and as the rays of light are from the sun, so also is the Son from the Father; and as heat proceeds from the sun and from the rays of light, so does the Holy Ghost proceed from the Father and from the Son. But as the light, the rays and the heat together are only one sun, so also the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are only one God."

It is impossible to comprehend this mystery with any degree of perfection. "When it is a question of this mystery," says St. Ambrose, "every voice is silent, not only mine, but even the voices of the angels." We men with our feeble understanding cannot even explain the most ordinary phenomenon which we see with our eyes and grasp with our hands. For instance, who can tell why snakes, by the power of their eyes, can so fascinate some animals that they fall a prey to them of their own accord? Why is it that the magnet attracts iron? Why does the bee make its honeycomb, the wasp its nest, the spider its web, the silkworm its cocoon so beautifully, so delicately, so skilfully, and accomplish it in so short a time? Truly we must unite our voices with that of the heathen philosopher and say: "Our understanding is as incapable of searching into the visible things of nature as the eye of the night owl is of looking at the sun." But if we are unable to fathom earthly things, how can we comprehend that which is supernatural, heavenly, Divine? Let it then be sufficient for us to know what faith teaches us: that there is one God, and that this God is threefold in Person, as St. John testifies, saying: "For there are three that give testimony in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (I. John v. 7.) Let us then submit our understanding, and surrender ourselves to faith, and relinquish all unnecessary inquiries. For God alone can make us understand these great mysteries. The most suitable representation of the Most Holy Trinity is that which we bear within us, our soul, which is indeed created to the likeness and image of God. As God is in Himself only one, so is also the soul in man only one; but as in God there are three Persons, so also is the soul threefold, in its powers, which are memory, understanding, and will. "By memory," says St. Bernard, "we resemble the heavenly Father; by understanding, the Son; and by the will, the Holy Ghost." So, too, "As the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet there are not three Gods in three Persons, but only one God, so is understanding the

soul, memory the soul, and will the soul, and yet there are not three souls in the three different powers, but only one soul." You have here the most striking image of the Most Holy Trinity. But let every one now look at this image and ask himself how it is with his memory, how it is with his understanding, how it is with his will. The Father is holy, the Son is holy, and the Holy Ghost is holy. Can we also say of your soul: Our memory is holy, because we always think of the Lord in all our actions and doings; our understanding is holy, because we do not use it for evil, or deceit, but only for that which concerns the honor of God and our salvation; our will is holy because it is always united to the will of God? Can you say this in all truthfulness? Or must you acknowledge with shame, that your soul resembles another kind of trinity, namely, that which is infernal and which is called by St. John: "The concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life." (I. John ii. 16.) That your soul, stained by impurity, avarice and pride resembles the evil spirit more than God the Lord, who created it to His image and likeness.

O let us exclaim with the penitent Augustine: "Most Holy Triune God! grant that we may think of Thee above all things, know Thee above all things, and love Thee above all things!" We shall then resemble Thee so perfectly in memory, understanding and will as Thou didst require of us in the first moment of our lives. Thou art "our hope, our salvation, our glory, O Most Holy Trinity."

XV. The Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity.

SYNOPSIS.—The third article of the Creed expresses the, a. unity of God; b. trinity of God; c. the attributes of God. The unity of God is proven by, a. reason; b. Scripture; c. teaching of Church.

I. Reason proves this from the very idea of God.

II. Scripture: a. the Old Testament, 1. by laws of Moses; 2. by words of Isaias. b. the New Testament, 1. affirmed by Christ; 2. taught by Apostles.

III. The Church declares it in her doctrines, taught by her, a. doctors; b. martyrs.

IV. Evil passions caused man to worship the false idols.

This is the third article of the five truths of faith which we must all know in order to be saved. In the Godhead there are three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Three truths are

here expressed: 1. That there is only one God; 2. That this one God is threefold in Person; 3. That each one of these three Persons has particular attributes. Our subject to-day will be:

God is one in essence.

Of this we are convinced,—

1. By reason.
2. By Holy Scripture.
3. By the doctrine of the Church.

I.

We have already proved that there is but one God. It is necessary for us, if we do not wish to belong to the fools, to say and believe that there is a Supreme Being—a God; it is just as necessary that we should confess that the existence of several Gods is an impossibility. And why is this? When we pronounce the name of God we understand thereby, as I have already shown you, a Being who comprehends in Himself every imaginable perfection; a Being who makes, rules and preserves all things; a Being all-seeing, omniscient, omnipresent, in short, the most supreme and most perfect good. Now if there were more than one God, this certainly would no longer be the Supreme, best and most perfect good, and, therefore, no longer God. You will understand this better by a comparison. If you were to say of a person: "This man is the wealthiest, or that woman is the most devout in the whole city," it would then be a fact that no other was so rich or so devout in the whole city as those two. For if he in his wealth and she in her piety had their equals it would no longer be true that he was the wealthiest and she the most devout because there would at least be some one else like them. In the same way, because we know, and Faith teaches us that God is the Supreme, best and most perfect good, there can therefore be only one God and not several. If there were several, then God would no longer be the Supreme, best and most perfect good, because there would be others like Him. This truth is so clearly shown by reason that many philosophers, even amongst the heathen, rejected a plurality of gods and taught the existence of one God only. Thus, for instance, Socrates taught that there was only one Supreme Being. Aristotle mentioned the one-ness of God. "What the captain is to the ship, the driver to the wagon, the law of the state in every country, the general to the army, that God is to

the world." Alexander the Great gave the following reply to the question why he was so ambitious to rule the world: "So as to deliver the universe from further war, for all wars arise from three causes: because of the plurality of the gods, or kings, or laws. Therefore, I desire to rule the world alone, that I may command that all should worship one God only, obey only one king, and observe only one law."

Sound reason teaches us this. Let us listen also to Holy Scripture.

II.

The one-ness of God was the fundamental teaching of the old law. For the preservation of this first truth of faith the people of Israel were commanded to separate themselves from the neighboring peoples who had fallen into idolatry and for forty years in the desert they had no intercourse with them.

The belief in one God was announced as the first commandment from Mount Sinai, and the Israelites were obliged to sacrifice to this one God as a proof that the strangers' gods were mere creatures, those very things worshipped as divine by other peoples. When Moses announced the Lord's commandments he said: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." (Deut. vi. 4) "See ye that I alone am, and there is no other God besides me; I will kill, and I will make to live; I will strike, and I will heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand." (Deut. xxxii. 39.) God again speaks through the Prophet Isaias: "Before me there was no God formed, and after me there shall be none. I am, I am the Lord: and there is no saviour besides me. From the beginning I am the same: and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall turn it away?" (Is. xliii. 10, 13.) The belief in the one-ness of God was affirmed also by Christ: "One is good, God." (Matth. xix. 17.) The Apostles preached everywhere the belief in one true God. In his first epistle to the Corinthians the Apostle Paul writes: "For though there be that are called gods either in heaven or on earth (for there are many gods and many lords), yet to us there is but one God." (I. Cor. viii. 5.) And elsewhere he writes: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. iv. 5.)

III.

The Church professes this belief in the one-ness of God in the apostolical Symbol wherein the word God only occurs once. And in the creed of holy Mass it says: "I believe in one God."

The Church professes this belief by her martyrs, who before the heathen tribunal steadfastly refused to worship idols, and who shed their blood for their faith. When it was suggested to St. Prokopius to offer incense to the gods, he exclaimed in noble indignation: "Away with your false gods! I know of one God only, who wills that we should offer sacrifice to Him and Him alone." Then they required of him to sacrifice to the four Cæsars, who at that time divided the Roman dominion between them; but he said with a smile: "It is not good to have many Lords; only one can be king," then he bared his neck for the sword.

This belief in the one-ness of God is proclaimed by the Church in her doctrines. The profession of our faith, says St. Augustine, consists in this that we say: There is only one God. St. Cyprian writes: "One God and one Lord!" That supreme power and perfection can have no equal. Let us take an example from earthly life. When did the rule of two or more ever begin with confidence or end without the shedding of blood? Pompey and Cæsar were related, but in spite of this jealousy for the supremacy kept them ever apart. But we need not be surprised at men, for the whole of nature bears testimony of this. The bees have a queen, the flocks a shepherd; how much more has the world a Creator and Lord, who orders all things by His word, rules all things by His power, and accomplishes all things by His strength. But some may think: If it is so evident that there can be but one God, how is it that in ancient times men worshipped so many gods? For many years mankind had preserved the knowledge of one God, who had created all things. But when after the flood they became separated in consequence of the erection of the Tower of Babel, and had spread themselves over all countries, this knowledge disappeared little by little, until finally the invisible God was entirely forgotten. Man now worshipped the sun, the moon and the stars. Some adored the fire, trees and rivers. Others worshipped snakes, birds, dogs, even stones and clay as divine. The Egyptians erred so much that they even went so far as to make gods of weeds and turnips, so that a

Roman poet jokingly remarked: "O thou holy people, whose gods grow in the garden." For this reason the Apostle writes: "And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things." (Rom. i. 23.) Now when we reflect that even at present there are still millions of men to be found in this error and darkness of mind, we ought to thank God that He has not afflicted us with the same blindness, but has allowed us to see the clear light of the true faith and has given us the inestimable blessing of membership in the true faith.

XVI. The Second Person of the Godhead.

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God."—I. John iv. 15.

SYNOPSIS.—I. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is called the "Word." A word is a representation or image, and is either mental or vocal. The Second Person of the Trinity is the Image of the Father. This Divine Word differs from the human word, a. in nature; b. in its eternity; c. in self-existence; d. in omnipotence; e. in having all knowledge.

II. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is also called "Light." This expresses His, a. eternity; b. majesty.

I.

The great doctor of the Church, Gregory of Nazianzen, gathered together in a discourse to represent the excellence and sublimity of the second Person of the Godhead, a great many eulogies. In one place he exclaims: "Thou Word of God! Thou Light! Thou Life! Thou Wisdom! Thou Power! All the names which Thou bearest delight me.' Nevertheless amongst these is the most ancient, the most general, the most exact of these names according to what Thou art called 'the Word of God' by which every one, who understands this name properly, will arrive at a satisfactory knowledge of Thy Divinity." You have often heard this name and pronounced it when you prayed: "And the Word was made flesh." But did you understand it? What really is the Word? When man perceives something with his understanding, he makes a representation of it in his mind, and produces an image of the object thought

of. This image or representation is called the word of the mind or understanding. It portrays and represents the object of which it is the image. It is called the word of the understanding, because it is as it were the outspoken thought of the understanding in the mind, resembling the words of the mouth, which, when uttered, are audible, and explanatory and represent what is lying in the thought and will of the mind.

Thus then the second Person of the Godhead is called the "Word." The heavenly Father as God is from all eternity, so has He known Himself perfectly from all eternity, and through this perpetual knowledge has produced the most perfect image of Himself. This image so produced, this representation is the second Person and for this reason He is called the Word, because in Him the thoughts and will of the Father are expressed.

Still this word is not the same nature as a human word, and we must not believe that the second Person of the Godhead is nothing but a word, as we men produce them. St. Athanasius, that intrepid champion of this mystery, writes: "We ought not to seek for a word in God as it is in men, because God is not like man; but as God in His nature is infinitely exalted above man, so also is this Divine Word as the likeness of God infinitely exalted above all human words, for (1) our human word, that is to say, the word of the mind in particular, must first come in time, and we must be here a long while before we are able to produce a word, because no one in the first moment of existence is at once able to use his understanding. The same may be said of the angels. Certainly they were endowed with wisdom and understanding in the first moment of their creation; but because they were created in time, and increased in wisdom and knowledge, there is then even for angels' words a time when they were not. On the contrary, the Divine Word was as eternal as the Father, who from all eternity knew and contemplated Himself perfectly, and by this knowledge and contemplation of His nature, produced His Word from all eternity, so that the Father was not a moment before the Word, the Word not later than the Father, the Father not sooner than the Word. Therefore, St. John says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." (John i. 1.)

2. The words of angels or men are such occasional things that they cannot be apart from human or angelic nature. They cannot exist of themselves, but must be produced by an angel or man. The

Divine Word, on the contrary, is not anything casual, which could not be, because nothing is casual in the Godhead, but everything is so necessary that it could not be otherwise and God be God. This is the Word, the noblest substance or essence in God, substantial and of one nature with the Father, who has produced it by contemplating Himself, as John testifies: "And the Word was God."

3. Human words and the words of angels are not of continuous duration. As the finite understanding of men and angels is changeable, and passes from one thought to another, so do words vanish and hasten away with thoughts. The Divine Word, on the contrary, remains unchangeable throughout eternity. For as the Word is with the Father, whose life is a perpetual knowledge of Him, contemplating Himself from eternity to eternity, He produces His word also from eternity to eternity, now as ever.

4. The created word is of itself powerless, insensible. Neither angels nor men are capable of working anything exteriorly by their thoughts and words, but are obliged, provided they wish to put their words into effect (realize them) to assist themselves with their hands and arms or other powers. The uncreated Divine Word, on the contrary, which is the same in essence as the Father, is almighty in itself and has the power of the Most High. "All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made." (John i. 3.) His creative power preserves also everything that is created; for "in Him was life," in Him is the redeeming, regenerating life, for "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

5. Every created word is always produced from the particular knowledge of a certain individual thing. For this reason there are amongst us angels and men as many words, as thoughts, and as many thoughts as there are individual objects of which we think. The Divine Word, on the contrary, is produced by comprehensive knowledge of all created and uncreated things, in virtue of which God knows all things which are in and without Him. For this reason God also has only produced one word from eternity, as David says: "God hath spoken once." (Ps. lxi. 12.) And He will produce no other word in all eternity. He has, however, uttered all things in this one Word, because He not only produced it by a simple knowledge of His Divine nature, but by an intense contemplation of His entire Divinity, in which all creatures, their powers, their operations, natures, thoughts, words, motions, conditions,

in fact, everything that is to be found in heaven and upon earth is included. In this exalted respect is the second Person of the Godhead called "the Word of God" or the "likeness of God," to signify thereby the perfect similarity of this second Person with the Father, and this image has nothing earthly or material in it, for it is produced only by the understanding or knowledge of the Father.

II.

The second name which is peculiar to this Divine Person is "Light." He is called the "splendor" of the Father, the Light, which enlightened all men. (Heb. i. 3.) St. John testifies to this when he says of the second Person: "This (the Word) was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." (John i. 9.) He was in the world, and the world was made by him. This name expresses so well the eternity of this Person. For the splendor or the light which flows from the sun is present simultaneously with the sun itself, and if the sun had been from all eternity, its light also would have been eternal. Now because the second Person is called the light or splendor of the Father, and the Father is eternal, therefore it must be also eternal with the Father.

The second Person, therefore, is "the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of His goodness." (Wis. vii. 26.) The eternal light is God the Father, whose splendor is the Son, for the brightness of the light is light. In Him is mirrored the beauty of the Father, and as a mirror reflects not only the figure of a man, but also his movements and gestures; so also does the Son not only reflect the image of His heavenly Father, but His works also, that is to say: with the Father He produces the Holy Ghost.

These are the two attributes which distinguish the second Person from the first and third. They are, 1. The Word or the image of the Father; 2. the Splendor or the light. I will conclude with the words of St. John: "Whosoever shall confess Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God." These words of eternal truth abound in consolation, and yet they prove the perdition of many, because they only keep to the sound of the words, and do not think of what is meant thereby. The greater part are of the opinion that if they believe in God and confess Christ, nothing else is wanting for their salvation. But they do not think that the true and

saving profession of a Christian must not only be with the mouth and the tongue, but with the heart and with works. Certainly the words of many are often holy, but their works truly devilish. For they confess that the Word was made flesh and taught us to live holy lives, but they will have nothing to do with His commandments and doctrines. They confess that Christ is the image of the Father, according to which we have all been created; that we may take this likeness as a model of our way of life, but they do not wish to resemble Him in poverty, contempt, persecution, crosses and suffering. They confess that Christ is the Splendor of the heavenly Father, the Light of the world, which is to enlighten all men; but "they love the darkness more than the light," crawl like the birds of night into the most remote hiding places and practice there sinful deeds that shun the face of daylight. This means, to speak according to faith, but to live and act against God. They have not the consolation that God remains within them, for they are against God.

XVII. Divine Providence.

"Be not solicitous; for your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things."—Matth. vi. 32.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Holy Scripture forbids all solicitude for the things of this life. Many do not understand this.

II. Solicitude is forbidden, because it, a. perplexes the mind; b. antagonizes faith; undermines hope, and shakes our confidence in God; c. it is of no avail. We should, however, exercise proper care in regard to our temporal necessities, for, a. this is commanded by God; b. it is necessary.

III. What is forbidden is, a. excessive care and anxiety; b. neglect of things of eternal life; c. neglect of things necessary in this life.

IV. God will not see us want, for if He takes care of the lower creatures He will surely provide for man, His own image and His child.

Holy Scripture tells us, that God Who created us, will provide for us whatever is necessary for our welfare, if we but trust in Him. It urges us therefore, not to be solicitous for the things of this world, but instead to seek the one thing necessary for eternal life, namely, the friendship of God. Many have misunderstood these words of Holy Writ, and hence they ask repeatedly: "Should we not trouble ourselves about the things of life?"

Should the laborer in the field lay aside the plough, the sickle

and the flail? Should the workman leave his workshop and leave his tools idle? God Himself says: "Be not solicitous, saying: What shall we eat, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things, and he will provide 'them.'"

My dear friends, we must make a distinction between care and solicitude. Divine Providence does not forbid man to take precautions, but it does forbid him to be over-solicitous. Precaution tries to provide for the necessities of the near future, without being over-anxious; while solicitude is that over-anxiety which worries all the time; whether the work on hand will ever be accomplished; whether it is worth doing at all, and what will happen if it should not be accomplished; and this solicitude of what the near future may have in store for us may be so all-embracing, as to absorb all our thoughts, and desires, and influence all our actions. It is this faint-hearted care, which, in the strife for the necessities of life, leaves God's Providence entirely out of consideration. That is prohibited; and justly, for, (1), it perplexes the mind, it directs all thoughts, desires and actions towards the goods of this world, and turns it away from that which alone is necessary—*i.e.,* God, and the salvation of the soul. "And the care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choketh up the word and he becometh fruitless." Thus says the Divine Saviour, and unfortunately we see His prophecy fulfilled every day around us. The Lord often speaks to us directly by interior admonitions, and enlightens us through His priests. Many hear His word, but with how many does it bear fruit? Alas! too often it has no effect, and why? Because the over-anxious care for the near future, and for worldly goods, leaves us no time to meditate upon God's word and still less time to practice it.

This anxious care, (2), antagonizes faith, undermines hope, and shakes our confidence in God. He who is so over-anxious seems to make the continuance of everything existing dependent upon human effort, endeavor and care. Therefore he evidently loses sight of the faith which teaches us that God alone is the preserver of all that is. He also deprives himself of all hope and confidence; for the same faith which tells us that God maintains everything, assures us also that God maintains it by virtue of His infinite love, and that He is always ready to grant to all whatever is necessary for continued existence.

This anxious care is, (3), quite useless; for by all this care we do not improve our miserable condition one iota, but make it more intolerable; we become lukewarm, morose and fretful, slow to do good and to overcome evil, as daily experience sufficiently proves. No good comes from increasing the troubles of this life, by such anxious solicitude; for the Lord Himself says: "Who amongst you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?" Just as little as you can cause God to retard the end of the world by one minute over the appointed time, as little can you prolong your life by anxious care and by your own power. Therefore it is unreasonable to be so very anxious about life and sustenance. What is there more insignificant than a hair! And yet our Lord says that every hair on our head is counted, and that we shall not lose a single one, unless God wills it. If God then regards, maintains and preserves each little hair, why should He not care much more for every human being, His own image, so that it may not perish? If man, with all his plans, devices and consultations, with all his strength and power, cannot make one little hair grow on his head, how can he change what has been ordained by God's all-wise Providence? If God wills it not then all our efforts are vain. For this reason He forbids us all anxious solicitude.

However, he does not forbid us to be *careful*—that is, to work and to provide for our necessities. He hates laziness, and it is His will that we should work, as holy Job tells us: "Man is born to labor and the bird to fly." (Job v. 7.) And again: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." (II. Thess. iii. 10.)

It is foolish therefore, to fold your hands idly in your lap and wait for food to appear on the plate and money to fill your purse. God is not so lavish with His miracles as to work them in support of laziness and idleness. "Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways and learn wisdom," says God. (Prov. vi. 6.) Observe how this little creature works, and works unceasingly, running hither and thither to gather in during the summer, so that it may have sufficient to live on in winter. You will never find it idle, but always free from anxious care and worry. And this is the command of God to Adam: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread," which means, as St. Chrysostom says, that by labor and work, but not by worry and foolish solicitude, shalt thou earn thy living. All I have said so far about sinful solicitude is comprised in the words of St. Thomas Aquinas: "If we do not wish to act

against the decrees of Providence we must (1), avoid all solicitude which extends itself over temporal affairs to such an extent as to interfere with our happiness; (2), and all solicitude which causes us to work beyond our strength and prevents us from taking needed rest and recreation; (3), all solicitude which makes us timid and faint-hearted, believing that the future holds nothing but adversity and misery for us.

If then you would prove yourself a true servant of the Lord, "seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice"—*i.e.,* be solicitous to become pious, to live honorably, and to work out your salvation. Then do all you can, to the best of your knowledge, according to your strength and your position. Pray when it is time to pray, sleep when it is time to sleep, eat when it is time to eat, and work when it is time to work. Everything else you may well leave to the care of God. Besides, you know for certain that God will not desert any one who lives a good and righteous life and trusts in Him. Does not Jesus Christ say: "Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and its justice, and all other things shall be added unto you"? "Put not your trust in princes, in the children of man, in whom there is no salvation," says the Psalmist, "casting all your solicitude upon Him; for He hath care of you." (I. Peter v. 7.) If this Father preserves the brute animals; clothes the lilies and the flowers of the fields so beautifully, and does not forget a single little bird or the smallest flower, how could it be possible that He would overlook us, who are to Him infinitely more than all animals and plants, and who are as men His image, and as Christians His children! This can never be! The Holy Ghost Himself says: "I have not seen the just forsaken." (Psalm xxxvi. 25.) Therefore, when nobody else can help you, God will surely come to your aid. He is not only the creator, but also the preserver and governing power of the whole world. And that should be enough for us when anxious care fills our soul.

XVIII. The "Gloria Patri."

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

SYNOPSIS.—I. That we should honor God is clear from the fact that (1) The Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity honor one another, as is seen from the Scriptures; (2) The Angels were created for this purpose and never cease singing the praise of God; (3) Man also was created for this purpose.

II. This prayer offers a good means of fulfilling this duty. It comes down to us from the times of the Apostles. It is an act of faith, hope, homage, obedience, charity, humility, thanksgiving.

III. In imitation of the Saints we ought to be willing to sacrifice all for the Glory of God.

The instructions which I have given you so far touching the greatest mystery of our faith, the Triune God, I will conclude now with that blessed ending in which God Himself seeks His rest, and after which all that is in heaven and upon earth should unceasingly strive. This end and aim, however, to speak briefly, is none other than giving to God alone the honor and glory due to Him. All mankind owes this honor to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. This honor God appropriates to Himself, and He demands it as a thing which belongs to Him alone. Let us, therefore, honor and praise the Triune God! I will show you to-day,

I. That we should honor Him;
II. How we should honor Him.

I.

This duty is shown us (1) by the example of the Triune God Himself, and (2) by the example of the heavenly spirits.

1. To honor and glorify themselves in the most perfect manner is the sweet occupation of the Divine Persons from all eternity. Certainly our understanding is not capable of forming a right idea of this mutual glorification, because all God's actions are infinite. What we can know and comprehend about them is taught us by St. John with the words: "For there are three that give testimony in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." (I. John. v. 7.) Each one of them gives testimony to the glory and perfection of the others. The Father loves His Son, and out of love He accords Him that

infinite honor which belongs to Him, as Christ Himself has declared with the words, "The Father that sent Me, giveth testimony of Me." (John viii. 18.) For this reason the Father has given Him a name, exalted above all other names, by the power of which every knee shall bend, in heaven, upon the earth, and under the earth. "For, to which of the angels hath He said at any time: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee?" (Heb. i. 5.) Christ was so certain of the honor belonging to Him through the Father, that while He was yet upon earth He could say: "But I seek not my own glory; there is one that seeketh it. It is my Father that glorifieth me." (John viii. 50, 54.) And the Father showed to the whole people that He honored His Son. He proved it at the river Jordan, at Christ's baptism, He showed it at His transfiguration on Thabor. There the heavens were opened, and from its heights He gave the most honorable testimony to His Divine Son when He said: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." As the Father honors the Son, so does the Son honor the Father. For He calls Him His Father, and He confessed Himself as His Son before the whole world. Therefore during His mortal life He was always considering how to do all things for the glory of His heavenly Father, and thereby fulfil His holy will. He was obedient to Him even unto death, spread His name over the whole world, announced His commandments, and sacrificed His blood and life in reparation for His glory, injured by sin. Yes, the tongues of all the Seraphim would be silent, if they had to describe the honor which the Father gave to the Son, and the Son to the Father from all eternity, and particularly upon earth in that moment when Jesus, speaking of His Passion, said: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee. And now glorify thou me, O Father, with thyself, with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was." (John xvii. 1-5.)

And so it is with the Holy Ghost. For the Father and the Son have infinitely glorified the Holy Ghost from all eternity, and He has glorified them, and He will glorify them for all time in a manner that no heart can feel, no lips can utter, no ears can hear.

2. For the increase of this glory, the blessed spirits, the Cherubim and Seraphim, down to the archangels and angels, exert all the powers of their understanding, and sing those exalted hymns of praise to the glory of the most blessed Trinity, whose entrancing melodies so often reached the ear of the beloved Disciple St. John,

and which he has so beautifully described in his Apocalypse. Since the first moment of their existence the angels repeat with delightful rapture and heavenly joy, without intermission, that heavenly Trisagion: "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts: all the earth is full of His glory." (Is. vi. 3.) When God created the world, and called creatures into existence, the angels stood around Him and sang the praises of every work of His hands. For that they are those morning stars, who, as Job says, praised and glorified God when He laid the foundations of the earth; they are those children of God who hailed the Creator, when they saw millions of creatures proceeding from the creative hand of God. When the Son of God was born at the midnight hour, the angels again sang glory to God: "Glory to God in the highest." (Luke ii. 14.) They appeared to the holy martyr Ignatius and sang hymns of praise to the most Blessed Trinity in alternate choruses. They sing thus day and night, and know of nothing more holy than the praise and glory of the Triune God. Everlastingly resounds to the Triune God that "thrice holy," and "praise and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving, and honor and power will they sing unto Him from eternity to eternity."

3. Now, if the angels in heaven give glory to God with such zeal, what should we mortals do? If God demands this glory, and the Divine Persons themselves in a certain measure rival one another in giving this glory, shall man not give this glory to God? "Hearken to me, O Jacob, and thou Israel!" He says through the Prophet Isaias, "I am He: I am the first, and I am the last. My hand also hath founded the earth, and my right hand hath measured the heavens, and I will not give my glory to another."

"Who, therefore," says St. Augustine, "seeks his own glory in his works, who strives for man's favor, without giving honor and glory to God, the same is a robber and a thief; because he takes away from God what belongs to Him. Not so, O man, not so! To God alone is honor and glory, whom all the inhabitants of heaven honor and glory, and whom also we are obliged to honor. What should we do then? How should we honor and praise the Triune God becomingly?

II.

I believe that one of the best means is to say frequently those prayers which our holy mother the Catholic Church makes use of which is "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy

Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." This little prayer is very ancient. Mention is made of the same in the time of Flavian and Chrysostom, both of whom were Bishops of Constantinople. When the Arian heresy arose and denied the Divinity of the second Divine Person, those Bishops ordered the "Gloria Patri" to be sung in all the Churches, in honor of the Most Blessed Trinity. At the petition of St. Jerome, Pope Damasus ordered that this eulogy should be repeated at the end of each Psalm, throughout the whole Church. Even before the time of the Bishops Flavian and Chrysostom, this little prayer appears to have been customary. For St. Athanasius, who lived before either of them, directed a young maiden to say the "Gloria Patri" three times, as often as she rose from table. It is worthy of belief, accordingly, that the holy martyr Ignatius, who lived in the second century of Christianity, and as Bishop of Antioch, had this hymn sung in his Church, and received it by tradition from the time of the Apostles. From his Church, in which the disciples of Christ were first called "Christians," the custom of singing the Gloria Patri appears to have been introduced into the other churches; a custom which was so pleasing to the Christian people that they made a "Rosary" thereof, which for this reason is called "angelic," because St. Ignatius received it from the angels.

This prayer is (1) a confession of faith, and indeed of the greatest mystery of Christianity; it is (2) an act of hope of eternal life which has been promised to us in the eternal abode of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; it is (3) an act of homage rendered to the Most Blessed Trinity; it is (4) an act of love, if we accompany the saying of it with the most sincere wish that the Most Blessed Trinity may be honored and glorified for evermore by the angels in heaven and by all creatures upon earth; it is (5) an act of charity, because we thereby encourage our neighbor to honor and praise God, for which end indeed each of us was created; this little prayer is (6) an act of gratitude, because we thereby show God the thanks we owe Him and the honor belonging to Him; it is (7) an act of obedience, because we thereby give to God what He desires and commands, namely, praise and honor; it is (8) an act of humility by which we ask no honor for ourselves, but give it to God alone. Finally, it is a beautiful prayer, the most noble and excellent. For to praise and honor God above all things in prayer is the exalted duty of the saints in heaven, of whom St. John says, in his Apocalypse: "And

they rested not day and night, saying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty who was, and who is, and who is to come." (Apoc. iv. 8.) For the honor of this Triune God, St. Peter, prince of the Apostles, endured joyfully the martyr's death, and died like His model, upon the cross. For this honor St. Paul spoke to his disciples zealously day and night, and for this reason he feared neither suffering nor death, heat nor cold, neither sea nor land, neither chains nor fetters; he was willing to risk all if thereby he could promote everywhere the honor of the Triune God. For this honor you should strive zealously every moment of your life. For to glorify the Triune God will one day be the eternal occupation of all the blessed. To promote this honor we have listened to these instructions on the mystery of the Triune God.

We have striven on the one hand to obtain a right knowledge of this exalted doctrine of faith, by which we confess that God is one in substance and threefold in Person; and on the other hand also to rouse ourselves in consequence, of this knowledge, to love and to praise the Most Blessed Trinity with fervor of heart; to honor and to praise it, so that you may merit one day to be allowed in company with the Angels and Saints to behold it face to face. We hope for this through the goodness of the Father, who created us for heaven; through the merits of Jesus Christ the Son, who died for our salvation; through the love of the Holy Ghost who by His graces has sanctified us for heaven. Let us therefore sing the praises of the Triune God, and exclaim reverently with the heavenly hosts: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

XIX. Our Soul the Abode of the Most Blessed Trinity.

"If any one love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him."—John xiv. 23.

SYNOPSIS.—I. This mission is the communication of the Divine Persons in a special manner to man. The difference between Divine and human mission—mission made clearer by analogy of an ambassador to the Holy See.

II. This mission takes place: 1st, invisibly—this is the usual way and serves to keep down the vanity of man; 2d, visibly—this happens very

rarely and only under extraordinary circumstances. Example—the descent of Holy Ghost on Apostles in form of fiery tongues.

III. Results of this mission: 1st, Sanctifying Grace; 2d, Increase of love and holiness; 3d, Stimulation to do great things for God.

What a consoling doctrine! The Son is begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and the Son, as an ambassador of God to humanity, to abide in our souls, to purify them, to sanctify, to bless them! This entry of God is called the mission of the Divine Persons. To comprehend this rightly I will answer three questions for you:

I. What is this mission?
II. How does this mission take place?
III. Why does this mission take place?

I.—What is this Mission?

To speak briefly, the Mission of the Divine Persons is none other than the going out of one of the Divine Persons, through which all the Divine Persons communicate themselves in a certain manner to creatures. But we should err grievously if we imagined that the mission of the Divine Persons take place in the same way as among men, one is sent to the other.

For 1. When one person is sent to another he departs from the one who sends him, so that the person sent and the person sending can not remain in the same place. Whereas in the mission of the Divine Persons, the Person sent does not separate Himself from those sending or delegating Him. Thence it follows that as the Son is sent into the world by the Father, to take the nature of man, and the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and the Son as ambassador, to sanctify souls, both in their Divine nature remained with the Father, although they filled the world with their presence. 2. In a human mission the dignity of the ambassador is always less than that of the one who sends him; for a king can not send an emperor, a servant can not send his master, but each one his inferior. But in the Divine Mission the Persons sent, the Son and the Holy Ghost, are as great, as powerful, as Divine, as the sender, the Father. 3. In a human mission the person sent changes his place of residence. But in the Divine Mission those sent remain always in the Godhead, and instead of a change produce only a new operation of grace, by which they are in a particular

manner with those to whom they are sent. 4. The Divine Mission does not take place by reason of a command, as with the Divine Persons there is no superior, and therefore no inferior, but an equal Divine authority. 5. The Divine messenger need not inquire into, or ask, or take counsel, as is the case with men. For there is no ignorance with the Divine Persons, but the most perfect knowledge of all mysteries. 6. Human missions are often only accomplished by force and violence. Whereas the Divine Mission takes place always from the most perfect freedom, because the Godhead is not subject to any compulsion.

From this it is clear that that miraculous mission which takes place through the Divine Persons is none other than the sending of a Divine Person which produces in mankind love and grace. If therefore the Son and the Holy Ghost produce in reasoning creatures love and grace, we may say that they are sent by the Father to dwell in mankind, to whom they are already near by their omnipresence. You will understand me better if I make a comparison. We will suppose that a king or president commissions a person who is just then residing in Rome to represent him at the Papal court, *i. e.,* to be his ambassador. Although this person was in Rome before he received the commission, yet he can say that he is "sent," "delegated" by the king or president to the Papal court. And rightly, because now he is in Rome in a new and quite a different manner than formerly, namely, by authority and in the capacity of ambassador. In the same way the Divine Persons in virtue of their omnipresence are always present to all creatures, yet they are not always called ambassadors, only when sent by the Father, they produce in the souls of men love and grace, through which they are present to mankind in a new and special manner, even indeed taking up their abode with him. This, then, is the Divine Mission. It consists (1) in the producing of the Divine Persons, and thus far it is eternal; and (2) in the producing of grace, and this is from time and destined for the salvation of mankind. O Christians, acknowledge what gratitude you owe every moment of your lives to the Most Blessed Trinity: to the Father, because He sends us His Son and His Divine Spirit, and thereby vouchsafes us grace and love; to the Son and the Holy Ghost, because they do not disdain to hasten as ambassadors of God to men who are so miserable and at times so unworthy.

II.—How Does this Mission take Place?

This was the second question. The Divine Persons can be sent to us in a twofold manner, visibly and invisibly. 1. The mission takes place invisibly when the Divine Persons produce in mankind love and grace, without thereby making their presence known by outward signs. This mission began with the creation of the universe, exists still in the present, and will continue as long as there are men upon earth. For God loves to distribute His graces and gifts in hidden ways, without show, so as to repress all feelings of pride in the hearts of His children. This is the reason why, here upon earth, no one is sure of the possession of God's grace. "No one knows," says the wise man, "whether he is worthy of love or hatred." And the Apostle St. Paul takes occasion from this to exhort all the fauthful: "To work out their salvation, with fear and trembling."

2. Nevertheless the good Spirit does not always hide His graces. Sometimes He gives His love and grace to souls in an almost palpable manner and imparts His gifts to them in such measure that you can see, so to speak, the Presence of God within them; and this takes place by the visible mission. It is not, of course, frequent, but still it happens now and then. On these occasions the Son, in union with the Holy Ghost, produces the most ardent love in the hearts of men and accomplishes thereby works which astonish thousands and oblige them to acknowledge that here human power is not in action, but the operations of God. It was just such a visible mission of which the Acts of Apostles tells up, where the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles in the form of fiery tongues, and illumined them with a knowledge, and enkindled so ardent a love within them, that in their words and actions the operation of the Holy Spirit could easily be recognized. For they spoke in strange tongues, knew the most profound doctrines, preached about the greatest mysteries, performed the most astonishing works, so that the Jews exclaimed: "Behold, are not all these, that speak, Galileans?" (Acts ii. 7.)

The mission of the Divine Persons is generally invisible, and the Holy Ghost comes for the most part without noise and without disturbance into the hearts of men. This is expressed by holy Job when he said: "Who doeth things great and incomprehensible, and wonderful, of which there is no number. If he come to me I shall

not see him; if he depart I shall not understand." (Job ix. 10.) And this happens thus, so that all pious and favored souls may abase themselves the more, and live in fear, so as not to lose God's grace and be ruined by pride.

III.—Why Does this Mission take Place?

This was the third question. When one person is sent to another person there is always a motive why he is sent. When no ordinary person but a prominent influential one is sent the matter is an important one. The more exalted and noble the ambassador is so much more important must be the object of the mission. Now, if the Divine Majesty sends to us men, Divine Persons, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the object of their mission must be a very important one.

This mission is none other than sanctifying grace and the operations of love. For it is not compatible with the sanctity of the Divine Persons to be sent about the material things of this world, which, though imparted to us by Divine power, are still nothing in comparison with sanctifying grace and divine love. For this does the Apostle St. Paul write: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." (I. Cor. xiii. 1.) The end and aim, therefore, of the mission of the Divine Persons is none other than either (1) to impart sanctifying grace, by which souls are withdrawn from sin and the dominion of satan; or (2) to enrich souls with virtues and graces, and to increase the sanctifying grace which is already present within them; or (3) to urge them to the practise of such works of charity as will be profitable for the salvation of their own souls and the souls of their fellow-men.

For this truly Divine end and aim are the Divine Persons sent to mankind, and remain in them as long as no impediment is offered to their operations.

O exalted dignity of those souls which are sanctified by the presence of God's grace! O exalted dignity of those souls who have become the abode of the most Blessed Trinity! "O God," we might exclaim with David, "thy friends are made exceedingly honorable." The Pope with his triple crown, the emperor with the scepter of his dominions, the king in his robes of state, is not to be compared with the exalted dignity of a true friend of God!

XX. The Second Person of the Godhead.

"Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee."—Ps. ii. 7.

SYNOPSIS.—Jesus Christ is the Son of God according to Divine and human nature. Scripture proves this. The Father begot the Son, and this too from all eternity. The Son is consubstantial with the Father and therefore has all His perfections. The difference between this begetting and human generation: 1st, The Divine Son did not come after the Father; 2d, He is as necessary as the Father; 3d, He suffered no delay in His begetting. Since the Son is consubstantial with the Father, He is not dependent nor beneath Him either in dignity or power, but has all His perfections and attributes and is in every way His equal. The Just are assumed by God as His heirs, hence are called "Sons of God." They are made partakers of the Divine Nature and are promised happiness with the Divine Son of God. The great dignity of this and the effect it should have on man.

The heavenly Father had two sons among men. Both came directly from Him, although from very different mothers. One was the first man, Adam, whom God created out of the earth. For this reason Sirach calls the earth "the common mother of all men." (Eccl. xl. 1.) And the evangelist St. Luke, who leads the genealogy of Christ as far back as our first parents, names the father of each race by always adding, "who was a son of," etc., but at the end of the genealogy, where he speaks of Adam, he says expressly, "Adam, who was of God," to indicate thereby that he was a child of God, and had no other father.

The second son of the heavenly father is Christ Jesus, both according to His Divine as well as His human nature. The Father Himself gives testimony of this when He says: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee!" That means, as St. Augustine says: "This day, *i. e.*, from all eternity, in which there is no yesterday nor to-morrow, but everything is the present, have I begotten thee by the eternal birth (generation) of the Divine power and wisdom." The power and wisdom of God, therefore, was, as it were, the Mother of the Divine nature of Christ. The first Adam (son) was made by the heavenly Father to be the head and father of all mankind, that is to say, of the just as well as the wicked. The second Adam (Christ) He made to be the head of all the elect, pious souls. The first Adam is from pure mercy a son of God; the second Adam according to His nature is the Son of God.

Of this exalted name, "Son of God," I have to say much to-day. With this name the Church concludes most of her prayers. This

name sounds upon our ears many thousands of times, in sermons and religious instruction. And rightly! for this name contains prerogatives which belong to no son of earth. The Son of God is:

I. An eternal Son.
II. A free, independent Son.

I.

If we do not wish to be led into serious error we should never, when it is a question of the Divine Persons or mysteries, take the words used in the literal sense which they have in the ordinary way of speaking. When men call any one a son or a father, it is certainly understood that the father was before the son, consequently he must be older than the son; the son is much younger, and is absolutely not the same as the father.

But it is entirely different with the Son of God in regard to His Father. The filiation of the second Person is eternal, as the paternity of the first Person is eternal. The Father is not a minute sooner in the Godhead than the Son; the Son not a moment later than the Father. As He has equal power with the Father, equal wisdom, equal sanctity, equal omniscience, so is He with Him at the same time from all eternity, consequently He is as old as the Father. He is with the Father from eternity, and He is one in substance with Him, therefore He is inseparable from Him from eternity, as the rays from the sun, and the brightness from the light. For this reason St. Augustine says: "Show me a flame without a light, and I will show you the Father without the Son." On earth the master must exist before his work, the tree before the fruit, the parents before the child, the producer before the produced. And this for three reasons.

1. No creature has at once in the beginning of its existence the necessary strength to produce anything of itself or by itself; only with time does the power of producing come. Thus no human being in the moment of his coming into the world can build a house, chisel a statue, or paint a picture. The tree must be a long while in the ground before it takes root, blossoms, and finally bears fruit. On the contrary, God the Father was from all eternity in the fullest possession of His infinite power and strength; from all eternity He was as mighty and powerful as He is at this moment,

there was nothing to prevent therefore His begetting His Son from all eternity.

2. The second reason is the freedom which we men have. For the accomplishment of a task we can, by reason of this freedom, choose a certain time, a day or an hour, we can postpone it as we please from one day to another, we can also begin the work when we like. This needs no proof. For there are numerous craftsmen who do not execute the work which they have undertaken for a long time; a like freedom, on the contrary, has no place in God from eternity. The begetting of His eternal Son suffered no delay, no postponement, it was as necessary, as God the Father from all eternity is necessarily God the Father. And as from all eternity He was not for a moment at liberty to be the Father or not to be the Father, neither was He at liberty from all eternity for a moment to produce the Son or not to produce Him.

3. The third reason is this, that all the works of man require a certain length of time, and they can not be accomplished in a moment. This, however, is not the case when it is a question of the generation of the Divine Son. For the heavenly Father has, so to speak, known Himself from all eternity by the infiniteness of His understanding, and by this knowledge was begotten His Son.

This is the manner in which God the Father begot His Son from all eternity. And for this reason the Divinity of the Father is not older than the Son, the Son not younger than the Father, when, as it is among men, the father is before the son, the operating cause is there before the work. The Son is like the Father, eternal, and infinite in eternity.

II.

The second prerogative of the Son of God is freedom and independence. This is a prerogative which no man can boast of. For every child is subject to his father for the very reason that he has life and existence from him, and is therefore obliged by Divine and natural law to thank him and serve him. On the other hand, the Son of God, although begotten by the Father, is not subject to the Father, not submissive, not less in Divinity than the Father. The reason is: God the Father has from all eternity necessarily communicated His own Divine nature to His Son. This is as perfect in the Son as in the Father, as great in the Son, as holy, as Divine, consequently as free and independent as in the Father. As little

as the Son could be without His Father, just as little could the Father be without the Son. For the life of the Father consists in the knowledge of His Being. But because the Son has this Being as entire as the Father, He is also not less than the Father, and therefore not indebted to the Father, for having communicated this existence to Him. For the Father could not have been if He had not communicated this Being to His Son. This production is more necessarily united with the Being of the Father than light is with the sun, heat with fire. For the sun could still be the sun even if its light were not visible; and the fire could still be fire even if it did not burn. But it is impossible that God the Father should be without the Son, because He is the Father by reason of having begotten such a Son. This is such an exalted miracle, my dear brethren, that we really do not know whether we should admire more the sublimity of the Son, or the greatness of the Father, who begot the Son: "Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery himself to be equal to God." (Phil. ii. 6.) Because He knew His nature and the greatness of His eternal birth required it, that He should be equal to the Father in all things, and as little subject to the Father as the Father should be to Him.

This equality and independence of the Son does not diminish in the least the majesty of the Father, but tends rather to His honor and glory. The greater the brightness of the light so much the greater must the flame be from which the light flows. We must then infer that the greater the Son is so much mightier must the Father be to produce such a Son.

Besides these two particular attributes, the eternity and independence, there belongs to the filiation of the Son of God also this, that it is the model and prototype of all those whom God has adopted as His children. Just as, according to the teaching of St. Paul, "Of God the Father all paternity in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. iii. 15), we can and must say that all just souls, "children of God" whom God has adopted as His children, are named of God the Son, and as heirs of Christ have a right to the joys of the kingdom of heaven. What a dignity for the just souls to be called "the children of God!" For 1. As the Son of God by virtue of His filiation partook of the Divine Nature as it is in the Father, so also will the just by virtue of their justification, by which they will be adopted as children of God, partake in a certain measure of the Divine Nature which is common to the three

Divine Persons, and possess the same. Thus does the Prince of the Apostles teach in speaking of the Son of God: "He hath given us very great and precious promises; that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature." (II. Pet. i. 4.) By the gifts of Christianity, namely, through justification and sanctification, we are, as it were, deified, we enter into communion with God Himself because we have thereby been born again children of God. In regeneration, however, God not only imparts to mankind His grace, His love, but Himself as a possession.

2. Just as the Son of God has in Himself all perfections and happiness, because He has the Divine Nature in Himself, all the just souls also are supremely happy, and so to say divine, because in consequence of the merciful participation of the Divine Nature within them, they can now say: "We are gods and children of the Most High."

3. Everything which belongs to the Son of God by nature, because He is the natural Son of God; belongs to all just souls by grace, because they are the children of God and have been adopted by God.

4. As the Son of God is born of the Father without intermission, so also are the just born of God without intermission, by His communicating His grace to them without intermission, which is the breath of spiritual life, so that they can always say: "Whether we live or die (according to the body), yet we are ever more the children of God and live in God our Father." Recognize your dignity, Christian brethren! and return not to the despicable slavery of the devil by sin and vice! Are you still just and devout, reflect then upon this: As long as you live piously you are a child of God, as Christ is the Son of God, and consequently an heir of heaven and co-heir with Jesus Christ. But should there be some among you who are conscious of being in grievous sin let them only reflect upon this: As long as I live in sin, I am no child of God, but a slave of Satan, a child of the evil spirit, and consequently an heir of his mercy and torment, and he will certainly soon amend. O that this might happen! for then this sermon would yield abundant profit, and I could desire nothing better.

XXI. Jesus, the Second Person of the Godhead, became Incarnate to Redeem Us.

"And the Word was made flesh."—John i. 14.

SYNOPSIS.—I. To have a knowledge of the Mystery of the Incarnation is most necessary, (a) for Christ prayed that the world might have this saving knowledge; (b) He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; (c) Not to have this knowledge to dishonor and despise Christ.

II. This knowledge is most useful, for the Scripture says that this knowledge is perfect justice. The contemplation of this Mystery gives strength and courage, and a right estimation of the things of the world. This Mystery arouses in our hearts (a) a horror of sin; (b) love of virtue and holiness; (c) a great love for our Redeemer, and this enables us to save our souls.

The doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God is

I. A most necessary one, and
II. A very useful doctrine.

I.

Every Christian who wants to be saved must know that the Son of God became Incarnate. Without this knowledge no one can enter heaven. For this reason Christ Himself, who desires that all mankind should be saved, prayed so fervently to His heavenly Father that the world should know Him. "Father," He said, lifting up His eyes to heaven, "glorify Thy Son," *i. e.*, let the world know who I am. For, "this is life everlasting; that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (John xvii. 1.)

We attain therefore into everlasting life through the knowledge of the Father and His ambassador, the Messiah, His Son Jesus Christ. And how could it be otherwise? For how could we live as Christians, and consequently be saved, if we did not know who and what Christ is? What service can we render to Him whom we do not know at all? How could we invoke, thank, praise and love Him of whom we know nothing? Of what avail is it to say and to know that there is a Christ if you do not know who this Christ is? what His name means? what His condition was, His office and His vocation? He says of Himself: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John xiv. 6.) Now if He is the way to heaven, it is neces-

sary to know Him, otherwise we should stray from the right path, and take the road which leads into the abyss. If He is the truth, then we must learn to know Him, otherwise we shall fall into error. If He is the life, then we are in death if we are not in Him through knowledge and love. If the knowledge of Christ is the cause of everlasting life, so is ignorance in regard to His holy Person the cause of eternal perdition. Therefore those men are the most miserable upon earth who know Christ only in name, who know nothing of His Divine Person, nothing of His Divine attributes, nothing of His miraculous actions. Enveloped in darkness, they take the path leading to error, to death, to everlasting perdition, because they know not Him, who alone is the way, the truth, and the life.

This is, too, the greatest affront which a reasoning soul can offer to Christ the Lord, not to know nor even endeavor to know who He is; as on the other hand it is a great dishonor and contempt of Him not to esteem and love Him as we ought, when once He is known. Truly such persons are not worthy to be called Christians, for God has Himself said: "Whosoever shall glorify me, him will I glorify; but they that despise me, shall be despised." (I. Kings ii. 30.) This dishonor happens, as I have just said, through ignorance. Let, therefore, all Christians in name only be assured that Christ, after their death, will avenge the affront which they offered Him in life, because they were more solicitous for the vanities and pleasures of this world than to learn to know Him. Then He will say: "Amen, I say to you, I know you not." (Matt. xxv. 12.) Through My Incarnation I have granted you such great benefits, have redeemed and sanctified you; but you, ungrateful man, did not want to know your Redeemer and Saviour. Therefore will I know nothing of you, but punish you according to the gravity of your crimes.

I do not say this at all of those unfortunate ones to whom the light of the Gospel has not yet been brought, and who live on therefore in darkness and unbelief, neither hearing nor knowing anything of Christ. The hard word of condemnation is spoken to those who, being born in the Catholic Church, and brought up with the milk of a pure and holy doctrine, have the light of faith before their eyes, and instead of one, have a hundred teachers to instruct them, but who because of their own laziness and indifference, pay no heed to the science of salvation, indeed despise it, or devote more interest to the foolish vanities of this world, than to the knowledge of their

faith and their Saviour. This is particularly applicable to those parents who are more interested in having their children taught the latest dances, music, etc., than in having them learn that which they ought to know, so as to live Christian lives and save their souls.

We can have compassion and forbearance with the heathen. For "how can they believe when they have not heard? how can they hear if they have no one to preach to them?" Their ignorance and unbelief are consequently in a measure excusable. But can the Christians say this? Just the contrary! How many are there in your community who do not want to learn or to hear that which is necessary for their salvation. To these, those words which St. John said of the world when Christ became Incarnate are still applicable: "He was in the world, and the world knew him not." (John i. 10.) Shameful! the dog knows his master, the ox and the ass in the stable know their owners, but Christian souls know not Christ Jesus their Redeemer.

It is necessary, therefore, that we should know what Christ is so as to live a Christian life.

II.

"For to know thee," says the wise man of the future Redeemer, "is perfect justice: and to know thy justice, and thy power, is the root of immortality." (Wis. xv. 3.) For this reason the seraphic teachers place the attentive contemplation of the life of Christ above all other spiritual works and practises. And rightly. Nothing is so capable of fortifying our spirits or so encouraging to our souls against tribulations, contradictions, and the temptations of the devil, nothing can convince us so well of the deceitful flattery of the world as the knowledge of the life of Christ. For first of all the mystery of Christ's Incarnation excites in the devout a fear and horror of sin by placing before our eyes the awful severity of the Divine justice, which was so hard to appease that Christ had to suffer and die to make satisfaction for a single mortal sin! Secondly, the knowledge of this mystery arouses within us a love and zeal for virtue, by representing to us the most perfect model and pattern of all virtues. Thirdly, it stimulates us to love God by placing before our eyes, on the one hand, the unutterable goodness and the magnanimity of God's love toward mankind, who so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son to spare us and redeem us; on the other hand, the infinite love of Christ in becoming Incarnate

for us, in taking upon Himself our nature, our frailty, our debt of sin, and becoming obedient for us, even to death upon the cross.

Certainly, dear Christians! God could not have shown a greater love for us than to sacrifice His only begotten Son for us! Yet He wished to draw all things to Himself! And Christ knew full well the nature of the human heart, knew its impulse to love the things which appear beautiful in its eyes, even in fact to adore them, which so often happened, as when men worshiped images of wood and stone. For this reason He wished to appear visibly in bodily form, that He might thereby adapt Himself to the longing of our hearts which demands to see what it ought to love. Has He not fulfilled that which He prophesied by the Prophet Osee: "I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love"? (Osee xi. 4.) This Adam is the second, the new blessed Adam Christ, who is at the same time God and man. His self-sacrificing love was to move all mankind to mutual love. In Christ, God had in truth drawn all mankind to Himself through love; for Christ, the God-man, can not be loved without at the same time God being loved also.

We learn all this by the knowledge of Christ's Incarnation, and St. Bonaventure rightly adds that the knowledge of this merciful and instructive mystery is the most profitable and the most excellent of all things which we call good and holy. Strive, then, by uninterrupted and attentive listening to the following short instructions to arrive at the most thorough knowledge of this mystery. For there is nothing more important in this world than the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, Our Redeemer.

XXII. The Third Person of the Godhead.

"God is love."—I. John iv. 8.

SYNOPSIS.—As the works of Omnipotence are attributed to the Father; the work of redemption to the Son, so to the Holy Ghost is given the works of love.

The Holy Ghost is the mutual love of the Father and the Son. This Love is perfect and real, not accidental. It is a love of great estimation—of benevolence and of delight: from this one yet threefold love comes the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is called the Spirit or Breath of God—for this Love comes from the very Nature of the Father and the Son: it is from eternity—and is all Holy.

Its effects: It strengthens us—revivifies us—fills us with love of God —curbs our passions—moderates our desires—blots out our sins and teaches us the lesson that God is love.

"True Christians are the children of God, sons, beloved heirs of God." This, if you remember, was the conclusion of our last instruction. The Apostle St. Paul speaks of this adoption in his epistle to the Romans; he speaks briefly of the signs of this adoption; of the future glory and hope of the children of God; of our ardent desire for the perfecting of this adoption which will come with the death of the body. He attributes this adoption to the operation of the Holy Ghost, who, by the outpouring of love, produces a change in the interior of our sinful hearts and inspires us with childlike confidence. From this you see that the works of love are attributed to the third Person. As the works of omnipotence are attributed particularly to the Father, the works of wisdom to the Son, so the works of love are given particularly to the Holy Ghost. We shall speak of this third Person to-day. We will consider

I. What He comes, or
II. What He is.

From both you will see that He is nothing else but love.

I.

The moment, to speak humanly of God and eternity, that God the Father begot by His infinite knowledge of His Being, an image of Himself, *i. e.*, the second Person of the Godhead, His Son, and saw how exactly He was like unto Him, how perfect, how holy, how equally glorious, how Divine He was, the Father was inflamed with an infinite love for this His Son. As the Son perceived this infinite love of the Father toward Himself, He embraced the Father with an equal love, *i. e.*, with an infinite, immeasurable, unparalleled love.

Now this mutual love between the two Divine Persons, Father and Son, was a supremely perfect Divine act of the will from which necessarily a third something must arise. For as the real knowledge of a thing produces a word which is the image of the thing known, so does the real practise of an ardent love in us produce an affection for the person beloved, which affection is properly called love.

In this way, to speak again according to human comprehension

did Father and Son produce also by their mutual Divine and eternal love an affection toward themselves as well as toward that which they loved. But this affection produced by the act of love, because it finds its being in the Divine Persons, is not accidental, but is a substance, a being. And because this affection, this formal love, proceeds from the Father and the Son at the same time, so is it just for this reason something different from Father and Son, and because this affection, this formal love is present in the Divine substance itself, so is it also itself Divine, it is what God is, and forms besides the Father and the Son the third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, therefore, according to His Person, is none other than the mutual affection of the Father and the Son, and the operation of the love of the Father and the Son, or briefly, the love of the Godhead.

This is the eternal origin of the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the actual love of the Father and the Son. This love indeed in both Persons is one and the same; still, as the Divine Being contains all perfections in itself, in the same way does Divine love contain in its unity all the operations of love. For this reason we can say that this love, from which the Holy Ghost is, was, as it were, a threefold love in the Father and the Son, and thus first a highly esteemed love, by virtue of which one Person preserves that high estimation of the other, which belongs to each Person by reason of His infinite glory, power, and majesty. Secondly, a love of benevolence impelled by which each Person readily wishes the other from all eternity to enjoy all the glory, honor and delight through all eternity. Thirdly, the love from which the Holy Ghost proceeded was a love of delight. This is the supreme love proper to the Godhead. The Father finds His delight in these inexpressible productions, and rejoices in the infinite glory of His Son, as if He said to Him eternally: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. xvii. 5.) And the Son in return has the most supreme delight in the majesty of His Father, and finds an infinite joy in the infinity and perfection of the Father.

From this one, but at the same time threefold love in the Godhead originates the Holy Ghost. He is the operation and the fruit of eternal love, the joy of the uncreated Persons, as also the fruit of the Holy Ghost is the joy of created persons, according to the words of the Apostle, who writes: "The fruit of the Holy Spirit is joy." (Gal. v. 22.)

So much of the origin of the Holy Ghost. Now we will hear about the nature of this Divine Person, or what the Holy Ghost is.

II.

I have already said in the first part that the Holy Ghost is none other than the operation of love, that means the affection of the mutually loving Divine Persons, or better, the formal love between Father and Son.

To understand this rightly, though, we must know that the love of the Father and the Son is called a breath or spirit. For all ardent love is, as it were, a breath, an aspiration of the heart. Now, as both only breathe love, and from out this love the third Person proceeds, for this reason He is called breath (spiritus), or ghost. And rightly. For 1. As the breath comes from within, from the heart and the lungs, so also does the love of the Father and Son come from the innermost part, from the innermost essence of the Divine nature of the Father and the Son.

2. The breath is caused by the living warmth of the heart; in the same way the love of the Father and the Son is, as it were, the living warmth of their Divine love.

3. As the breathing is unceasing as long as life lasts, so also is the eternal love of the Father unceasing, and without beginning and without end. The breathing of man, although continuous, still is interrupted by a momentary cessation. But the Father and the Son breathe eternal and constant love, it being intimately united in both of them, without the slightest cessation.

4. Breathing moderates the heat of the heart's blood, so that on one hand life may not be endangered by too great heat, and on the other hand the necessary warmth for life may be preserved. And so it is with the love of the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost proceeds from them as the breath, as the aspiration of the Father and the Son, who so communicates Himself to our souls as to moderate in us the unruly desires and sensual affections, in return for which we receive the heat, the fire which is necessary for the spiritual life, the Divine love. Hence this third Person of the Godhead is called the Spirit of God. For He inspires all things by His grace, rekindles that which is extinguished, fortifies the weak, moderates the overheated, dries that which is watered by the tears of repentance and affliction, refreshes and consoles whatever stands in need of consolation.

5. We ought to remark that the love of the Father and of the Son is coupled with an infinite holiness, and therefore differs from most human affections which arise from natural inclinations and sensual propensities. Just on account of this love Father and Son are infinitely sanctified. Even in us men the love of God has a sanctifying power. It consumes like fire all the dross of sin, purifies souls, sanctifies them, and makes God love them not less than they love Him. And even if a soul be stained with a million sins, this love will cause it to hear with the penitent Magdalene those consoling words: "Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much." (Luke vii. 47.)

Now, if the real practise of love, which in comparison to Divine love is quite cold, and almost dead in us, has the power to purify and sanctify our souls, what sanctification and power must the actual practise of an infinite love have in God? For this reason the Father is holy because He loves the Son; the Son is holy because He loves the Father, and for this reason the Spirit in particular is distinguished by being called holy, because He is the sanctifying love of the two Persons, and proceeds from their love.

You have hereby heard briefly, and, as I hope, with God's assistance understood also, who the Holy Ghost is, and whence He proceeds, *i. e.*, the procession from and the nature of the third Person of the Godhead. Herewith I shall also conclude my sermon with the words with which I began it, "God is love."

"God is love," says the Disciple of love. O what can be mightier than God? Do you need his assistance—this God is love! What can be holier than God? Are you wanting in holiness?—this God is love? What can be more Divine than God? Do you wish to partake of the Divine life? God is love! Those who wish to live virtuously must love! and to die holily they must love. That they may one day be with God, they must love! But their love must be constant, faithful, and holy.

XXIII. The Mystery of the Incarnation—Viewed in Parables.

"He spoke in parables to them: and without parables he did not speak to them."—Matt. xiii. 34.

SYNOPSIS.—Like all mysteries, that of the Incarnation is beyond the grasp of human reason, yet some little knowledge of it may be gained by a consideration of certain analogies. Theologians compare the Incarnation: 1. To a garment—this analogy based on Scripture. 2. With the union of rational soul and body in man—consequences of this union. 3. With a sponge immersed in water, which nevertheless retains the nature of sponge. 4. With the relation existing between substance and accident in all existing things. The abasement of Christ and the elevation of man by the Incarnation.

The mystery of the Son of God is, and always will remain, a mystery; no human understanding will ever be able to fathom it. For this reason then Isaias exclaimed: "Who shall declare his generation?" Meanwhile theologians have made use of various parables so as to come to the assistance of our feeble understanding and represent to us this miraculous, adorable work. We hereby imitate the Saviour who enveloped His teachings in a garment of parables, and endeavored thereby to render them comprehensible to His listeners. These parables, which are calculated to explain the mystery of the Incarnation, will be the subject of our contemplation to-day.

I. Let us suppose that a person is by two others clothed with a certain garment. Now, as in a case of this kind, three persons are occupied with the clothing, although only one is actually clothed; in a certain respect it happened thus in the mystery of the Incarnation. The three persons of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, together clothed one of them with humanity as with a garment, and although the entire Trinity cooperated in this, still only one of them, namely, the Word or the Son of God, was clothed with the same. This parable is in nowise so plain or so unimportant as it appears to be at first.

It is a very suitable comparison to give us an understanding of the Incarnation of Christ. For the Holy Ghost Himself in Scripture calls Christ's incarnation a dress, a garment. He also says through the Apostle St. Paul: "Christ being made to the likeness of men, and in shape found as a man" (Phil. ii. 7), that means, that according to His body and His nature Christ was also a man, as we

are all men. St. John likewise writes of the Incarnation of Christ under the name of a garment: "And he hath on his garment and on his thigh written: King of kings and Lord of lords" (Apoc. xix. 16). Isaias, who in his prophetical moments foresaw the Messias in His passion streaming with blood, says, "Why then is thy apparel (i. e., thy body) red, and thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine press?" (Is. xliii. 2). The Incarnation of Christ accordingly is represented to us figuratively as a garment. And it is most significant! 1. For as a person on leaving his house to associate with others, clothes himself in a garment befitting the occasion, so did the Eternal Word, when He left His Father's house to come into the world to us, clothe His invisible Divinity with visible humanity, as with a garment. 2. And as the garment is something exterior, and has nothing of human nature in it, so also humanity had nothing in it of the nature of the Divine Word; for as a man can be without a garment, so could the Eternal Word have been without human nature. 3. And as a man's body is not destroyed, nor torn, nor disfigured, if his garment is torn into fragments, so also did the Divinity remain unhurt, uninjured, without pain, although the humanity was wounded and killed.

II. Our second parable in explanation of this great mystery is taken by the doctors of the Church from the union of the rational soul with the body which takes place in every human being before birth. "For as the reasonable soul and the flesh is one man," says the Athanasian Creed, "so God and man is one Christ." This comparison, according to the opinion of St. Thomas Aquinas, is more analogous to the mystery of the Incarnation than any of the others. Only we must make distinctions so as not to fall into errors.

The human body must for instance serve the indwelling soul in a twofold respect: 1. As an instrument or tool required to perform exterior acts; and 2. As material which, united to the soul, composes a single human nature. Now we must not believe that the union of Divinity with humanity took place in such a manner that the humanity of the Divine Word served only as material, and composed one nature with Him; but there remained in this union of both natures the Divine as well as the human, perfectly distinct, both unmixed in their nature. While by the union of a reasonable soul with the body of man, there exists only one nature, the human, there were on the contrary two natures united in one Christ, the human and the Divine. Therefore we ought to use

this comparison of the union of soul and body with the union of Divinity with humanity only in so far "as the body is united with the soul as an instrument to put its will exteriorly into practice; so did humanity serve the Divine Word as an instrument by means of which to accomplish the redemption of the world." It follows consequently: 1. That as the immortal soul surpasses in dignity and superiority the body formed out of dust, so does the Divine Word infinitely surpass human nature in sublimity. 2. As the soul has its abode in the body, which is called its dwelling-place, thus did the Divine Word dwell in human nature and might call it the house of God. 3. As the soul communicates life, strength, and movement to the body, and makes, as it were, an entirely different being of it, so also does the Divine Word animate human nature in a new way and give it in a manner a new nature whereby it is exalted above all other creatures. 4. As the body without the soul is powerless and lifeless, so would mankind have remained insensible to all spiritual inspirations without union with the Divine Word, and could never have been able to raise itself to the accomplishment of the great work of redemption. 5. As the body has life and its blessings, beauty, honor, pleasures only through the soul—for they vanish with the departure of the soul—so also did the humanity of Christ have all glory, honor, and prerogatives from the Divine Word. 6. As the reasonable soul can demand subjection from the body with which it is united—for it gives life and motion to it—so too can the Divine Word demand of mankind, because it is united to it, honor and love, praise and thanksgiving, as a tribute to it. This obligation of gratitude and love is laid upon us, dear Christians, and upon the whole world. For our sake and for our salvation, God assumed human nature, and had He not done so, we should all have been lost eternally. But this may still happen if through base ingratitude, we do not become partakers in this blessing. Christ certainly died for all, but still His death does not make all happy. For "He who created thee without thyself," says St. Augustine, "will not save thee without thyself," without thy co-operation.

III. You will understand this mystery of the Incarnation still better by another analogous example. Imagine to yourselves a very large sponge, that has just been thrown in the sea. If you watch it you will see that every part of it is full of water, the sea is over it and under it, it is surrounded on all sides by the sea. But neither

the sponge nor the sea loses its nature. The sea then is in every part of the sponge, still the sponge is not in the entire dimension of the sea; for the sea is a wide and deep ocean and can not be filled up by the sponge. This figure strikingly represents to us the union of the Divine and human nature. The sponge represents to us in a sensible manner the sacred humanity of our Redeemer and the sea represents His Divinity; now the latter so penetrated His humanity, that not the smallest part was to be found in the body or soul of our Saviour, which was not penetrated by it. But human nature did not for that reason cease to be what it was, namely, a finite, restricted nature; it can never approach to God, for He is the boundless ocean which grasps and fills all things, but can never be grasped or contained by any other thing. From this parable you see that the Incarnation is the most intimate and perfect union of the Divine with human nature, by which God became man, and man became God.

IV. The fourth parable, with which I shall conclude, is taken by theologians from accidental things and their relation to actual things. We distinguish namely in objects that which is actual, for instance, the wall, and that which is accidental to them, for instance, the paint on the wall. The substance or nature of a thing always exists in and by itself, without anything else being necessary to it. Thus for instance, the wall exists, even if there is no paint on it; so also an iron is an iron whether it is heated or not; a stone is a stone, and exists, whether polished or not, etc. On the contrary, accidental things, as whitewash, heat, cold, and so forth, do not exist of themselves, they must therefore be united to a body, and be borne by the same, as for instance the whitewash is borne by the wall.

Now this truth is made use of by theologians in speaking of the mystery of the Incarnation, and they say: In the Incarnation of Christ the humanity assumed may be compared to the Divinity as accident to reality. By the omnipotent power of God the humanity of Christ in the first moment of its conception was in a miraculous manner bereft of its own understanding and united with the Divine Word, so that of itself it could no longer exist, but had to be borne as it were by the Divinity of Christ. The Divine Word could exist of itself from all eternity without humanity, as well as at that period of time when it assumed human nature, so as to make one Person with it: the God man, who is Christ Jesus. Dear Christians, did the Saviour wish only to deliver the body and soul

which He had assumed from sin and its consequences? Did He wish only to redeem, sanctify, and glorify that one human nature? Certainly not; He wished to redeem all of us, the entire human race. For this reason also the whole human race must be united with Him. Hence the Saviour Himself says, "Without me you can do nothing" (John xv.). Now as the first human nature, when it was to be united with the Divine Word, was bereft of its own existence, in consequence of which it could no longer exist in and of itself, so should we all, if we desire to be united to God, no longer exist in our self-will, in our judgments, in our ability and love of self, but lay aside all these, that we may exist only in God and for God. Then we shall be intimately united with God. O blessed soul, thou, that canst exclaim: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me!"

XXIV. The Incarnation—Befitting.

"And when he drew near, seeing the city, he wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known. . . . the things that are for thy peace."—Luke xix. 41.

SYNOPSIS.—The divinity of Christ proved by His life, and especially His miracles—by the fulfilment in Him of so many prophecies. This union of the divine and human nature in Christ was not unbefitting either on the part of human nature or on the part of God, for: 1. The human nature of Christ was so elevated by special gifts from God that Christ did not hesitate to assume it. 2. By this union the power, majesty, glory, wisdom, and goodness of God are revealed in a remarkable way to us. 3. Because of this union whatever was lost through sin has been regained.
Practical reflection.—The "et incarnatus est" and the "Angelus."

One prophet after another was sent to Jerusalem, yet they were mocked, stoned, and put to death. At last the greatest of all prophets came and preached His saving doctrine in the temple at Jerusalem; still even He was not recognized as the Messias and Saviour of the world. O lamentable blindness! The Redeemer stands at the doors, and they are not opened to Him! He walks through the streets of the city approaching destruction, and Jerusalem will not be saved! The hour of suffering is at hand, but all His pains and sufferings will be lost for the sick Jerusalem—it knew Him not! Is it surprising that the most loving Heart which ever beat burst into a storm of tears?

Dear Christians! From this darkness of mind in which Jerusalem walked we have extricated ourselves by the illumination of Chris-

tianity. God has spoken to us, and taught by His word. We say to Christ with Peter: "Thou art the son of the living God!" This truth is confirmed by the Holy Ghost who, speaking by St. John, says: "The Word was made flesh." This truth is attested by the miracles of Christ, for He performed miracles which no man could do of himself, and He proved thereby that He was not only man but that at the same time He was God Almighty. This is also attested by thousands and thousands of martyrs, who have shed their blood for this truth. This it is which was declared by all the Prophets, and all the prophecies, which have been preserved in reference to the Messias. For in Christ Jesus they were all fulfilled. He was born in time as Jacob and Daniel prophesied. He was conceived of a Virgin as Isaias prophesied. He was born in Bethlehem of Juda as Micheas foretold. He made His entry into Jerusalem seated upon a colt as Zacharias prophesied. He let Himself be led to the slaughter like a meek lamb, rose again from out the grave, and triumphed over death and corruption as the Psalmist prophesied (Ps. xv. 10).

Therefore this Christ is the true Messias, the anointed of the Lord, our Emmanuel, God clothed with our humanity. For this reason no orthodox Christian doubts for a moment that Christ, the Divine Word, became really man. But many might ponder and doubt because on the one hand of the Majesty of this Divine Word, and on the other hand of the misery of our human nature, whether it was befitting that the Divine Word should take human nature.

I will solve this difficulty in to-day's instruction by showing from the exalted preeminence of the union of the Divine Word with human nature that the Incarnation (1) in respect to the (assumed) human nature and (2) on the part of God was befitting. From this you learn to know this great mystery better.

1. Whoever looks upon the work of the Incarnation with earthly eyes, may deem it unbefitting that the Son of God should have united Himself to a mortal nature, so infinitely far from God, and to a body formed of flesh. But we should never measure these extraordinary actions of God by the standard of earthly wisdom, nor determine their dignity according to the cold calculations of human reason. Faith alone gives us the right standard thereto. But it teaches us that the humanity of Christ was in nowise subject to those failings and imperfections with which our nature is so abundantly burdened. And although His humanity in His natural qualities

had all that we men have according to our nature, still it was gifted with such prerogatives that it was exalted above all creatures. The flesh of Christ's humanity was in a miraculous manner formed from the purest blood of a Virgin without spot, by the power of the Holy Ghost and received thereby a purity which surpasses all human ideas. With this flesh God united a soul full of inexpressible beauty, full of grace, full of the knowledge of the most exalted virtues, so that it shone brighter in this new garment than the sun in its splendor. As a garment of plain cloth does not seem suitable for a monarch, but when ornamented with gold, pearls and precious stones is considered fit for a king's robe; so also did this perishable frail humanity, after God had adorned it in the womb of a Virgin with such glorious gifts, appear so beautiful in the sight of the Divine Word, that He did not hesitate as King of Glory to clothe Himself with it. The prophet David in spirit foresaw the Son of God arrayed in this beautiful garment, and carried away with admiration, the royal singer sang: "O Lord my God, thou art exceedingly great, thou hast put on praise and beauty: and art clothed with light as with a garment" (Ps. ciii. 1). "The Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded himself" (Ps. xcii. 1).

2. And why should it not be befitting that God should show His glory, His power, His wisdom, His goodness? Now all these He has revealed most perfectly in the mystery of the Incarnation.

The way and manner of the union exalts the honor and glory of God. For it extends on the one hand to the Divine Word, that is to the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, even to the Divine nature itself. Hence theologians, in speaking of this mystery, say that the Divine nature was united to human nature, and the Divinity to humanity. On the other hand this union extends to the human nature which is made up of body and soul, flesh and blood, and the individual members of the body. It extends also to the soul, as to the superior part of man without which he could not live. The soul of man was corrupted in its original powers by sin. The Son of God, who came to heal everything that was corrupted, united Himself there with a reasonable soul so as to be able to practise through it all those interior operations of love and worship of God by which he was to redeem man. But as human nature consists of soul and body, of spirit and flesh, therefore the Divine Word united Himself also with body and flesh. And for this reason this mystery is so appropriately named the "Incarnation."

For "the word was made flesh" (John i. 14). Still this union not only extended to the body of mankind but also to the blood. "In Christ," says St. Cyril, "the Word united Himself to the blood, as well as to the body and soul." And the Apostle St. Paul confirms this with the words: "Forasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself—Christ—in like manner partook of the same" (Heb. ii. 14). Hence it is that this blood has the power to cleanse the world from their sins, and that we adore this precious blood in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, because like the body of Christ it is united to the Divine Person. O infinitely exalted union! How Thy sublimity presses us into the dust, so as in the dust to honor and glorify the Godhead!

But in this union He has also shown His power, wisdom, and goodness. For what can be more powerful than to unite most intimately with one another objects which are farther apart than heaven and earth? What can be wiser than for the Redeemer of the world to unite the first with the last to connect the Divine Word as the beginning of all things with mankind who, in the creation of the world, was the last? What can be more good or kind than that the Creator Himself should communicate Himself to His creatures and be united with them? His goodness is great because by His presence He communicates Himself to all creatures. His goodness is greater because He unites Himself with the just by His grace. But this is the greatest measure of goodness that He has united Himself to human nature in one Person.

3. Through this union everything that the world had lost has been regained. A stream of boundless graces is opened to it, sinful concupiscence is lessened, the glory of God promoted, His honor increased, His name extended, His enemies brought to shame, the whole of nature renewed and placed in a better condition. For "In Christ," writes the Apostle St. Paul, "God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. In the dispensation of the fulness of times, to establish all things in Christ, which are in heaven and on earth" (Eph. i. 3 and 10). O dear brethren! What blessings have flowed upon us through this union! To what an exalted plane has not the Son of God lifted up mankind disgraced by sin? How gloriously adorned does this image appear again which God made according to His likeness, and which the evil spirit had deformed so frightfully? Therefore we ought as often as we reflect upon this union of God with humanity, or when we utter

it with our lips, to thank God, and if not the whole body, at least bow our head, because He has vouchsafed to take our body and become flesh! Behold the Church in her servants. As often as the priest repeats the words in Holy Mass: "The Word was made flesh," he falls upon his knees; as often as the words: *"et incarnatus est"* are sung by the choir at High Mass, every one bows reverently. And what do you do when you hear the bell ring for the "Angelus," and you are invited to remember with gratitude the great and ever adorable mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ? The Church reminds us three times during the day of this unspeakable blessing, and how often do we really think about it? You ought to fall upon your knees thrice during the day at the words: "And the Word was made flesh," and praise the boundless love of your God! But what do you do? Alas! you seldom think about it, especially in the hour of temptation! God took our flesh, He became our brother in the flesh—and you do not fear to sin against your flesh! You have become related by blood to the second Person of the most adorable Trinity and dishonor your body! What a responsibility! Ponder this well, and keep your body holy!

XXV. The Incarnation—Necessary.

"The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men."—Luke xxiv. 7.

SYNOPSIS.—It was impossible for man to redeem himself after his sin, hence some one was needed who could save man and satisfy the outraged majesty of God. Christ alone could do this, as is seen from the malice of sin and the infinite majesty of the God offended by sin. Christ alone could render perfect satisfaction for sin. For this purpose it was required to offer a reparation: 1. Equal to the injury. 2. With something not belonging to the one offended. 3. Which would be entirely voluntary. These conditions could only be fulfilled by a God-man.

The great love of Christ for us shown in His acceptance of these conditions.

We have all sinned in Adam; for this reason it was necessary that Christ should become man to redeem the world. If He had not become man, He could neither have suffered nor died, for as God He was neither subjected to pain nor death. Still, could we not have been redeemed in any other manner? Could not an angel, one of those exalted spirits, have accomplished this work of redemption?

No, the Son of God must be delivered into the hands of sinners, must become man.

I. To restore to God the glory of which He was robbed.
II. To render satisfaction to His justice.

I. No one can comprehend the necessity of the Incarnation who has not first of all reflected upon the malice of sin. Sin which Adam committed and which we have committed in him, was in nowise insignificant. It was a death blow, whereby millions of noble immortal souls, which were created for eternal life, were killed. It was a robbery whereby God was robbed of His greatest good, His glory for the promotion of which He had created everything that was. It was an infinite evil, because God, as the Supreme Good, was thereby insulted. Mortals sins, says St. Thomas, which are committed against God have an infinite malice in them on account of the Infinite Majesty of God outraged. He gives as a reason: Sins are so much the greater, the greater the One is who is sinned against. The majesty and dignity of God is infinite; consequently the malice of a mortal sin is infinite and deserves to be punished unceasingly in eternity.

Hence it follows that no created being in heaven or upon earth could have discharged this punishment perfectly and restored the glory of God which had been robbed. If all the princes and monarchs of this world had covered themselves with ashes and done penance all their lives; if the most exalted heavenly spirits had taken on human nature and endured the most agonizing death; if Mary, herself the purest of creatures, had undertaken to make satisfaction, they could not individually nor collectively ever have made satisfaction even for one single human being. For they could only offer what was finite, whilst the outraged Majesty of God must demand the infinite. If man was ever to be taken into favor again and render to God the satisfaction due Him, then it was necessary that a Divine man (God man) should appease the heavenly Father. He must be God to render an infinite satisfaction, and must at the same time be man to suffer and to die, and thus make satisfaction; for God can neither suffer nor die. Now the Son of God, who is equal to His heavenly Father in the Godhead, saw this, and out of infinite incomprehensible love toward mankind, left heaven and took upon Himself our human nature. He was now God and man at the

same time, and therefore alone fit to render to God the Father an infinite satisfaction for the infinite offense of the first man. For it was sin that destroyed the eternal well being of the world and imperiled the salvation of all mankind; it was this sin which, with the exception of Mary, was inherited by all mankind without distinction, and was an object of aversion and hatred in the sight of God. What do I say? The Son of God only made satisfaction for the first or original sin? O no! "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (I John ii. 2). Christ came therefore not only to make satisfaction for original sin, but for every personal sin of every human being who ever was, still is, or ever will be. O boundless love of a God! But also: O inexpressible malice of sin, for the expiation of which it was necessary that God Himself should, and for that reason must, become man. And has He then expiated sin, has He paid everything that Divine justice demanded?

II. Yes, the Saviour has made perfect satisfaction to justice. We perceive this in that He completely fulfilled all the conditions demanded by a perfect satisfaction.

He who would render perfect satisfaction must first of all pacify the person offended in a manner which is equivalent to the injury done. The satisfaction rendered must be measured according to the circumstances of the debt incurred. If we give less than we took, it is not a complete satisfaction. But Christ fulfilled these conditions abundantly by offering to the offended God more honor in satisfaction than man had ever robbed Him of by sin. The honor is all the greater and has all the more value, the greater and more dignified the person is from whom it proceeds. The Person of Christ, however, who was made a sacrifice to the outraged honor, was a Divine one, of infinite dignity. Therefore the honor which Christ showed by the resignation of His Person, His soul, His body and blood by the oblation of all His works, was of infinite value, for humanity from which all these works proceeded had by its union with the Divine Word something Infinite and Divine, and therefore all its works had an infinite value. The second condition of a perfect satisfaction consists in this, that it is made with one's own property and not with that belonging to others.

For instance, a person could not make restitution by employing his master's money to pay his own debts with. This condition also was perfectly fulfilled by Christ. All His work, all His actions which

He offered up for our guilt was His property. Hence He says by the Psalmist: "What I did not rob, that have I sacrificed." He sacrificed His humanity, His soul and body, life and blood, all of which belonged neither to the Father, nor to the Holy Ghost, but solely to Him; it was Christ's own, because He only—the second Person of the Godhead—became man.

Perfect satisfaction must thirdly take place voluntarily and unconstrainedly. For justice is a virtue which can not be practised without free will. But Christ's death was voluntary, His passion was voluntary; for "He was offered because it was his own will," says Isaias of Him (Is. liii. 7).

The fourth condition for a perfect satisfaction consists therein that it must be made with a matter which we do not already owe that person to whom we must make satisfaction. This condition was perfectly fulfilled by Christ. For although gratitude laid upon Him the duty as Man-God to sacrifice His works, yet He was not obliged in justice to offer up this work with His blood and life for the salvation of mankind, and we could never have called Him unjust if He had not willed to die for us. Accordingly Christ offered up to the injured honor of God and for the guilt incurred by us through sin, the most perfect and abundant satisfaction. But He could not have made it if He had not become man. Therefore it was necessary that Christ should become Incarnate, to restore the outraged glory of God, and to make satisfaction for our sins. And Christ did this gladly so as not to let the immortal soul of man go to perdition. O dear brethren! So precious is the soul of man in the sight of God, and how little dost thou heed its loss! Daily so many go to perdition often before the eyes of the father or mother of a family, and they are not concerned about it. Even if it should cost life and limb to restore a single soul of your household from ruin, you should not hesitate an instant to sacrifice that life. An ox falls into a ditch, and it is rescued; an ass falls down, and it is quickly put upon its feet again; an immortal soul in thy house lies in a snare, and thou wilst not even utter a word nor move a foot to save this soul! Patience! The hour will come when thou wilt have to give an accounting for this soul, and also for the blood of Christ which has been so abundantly shed for each and every human being. Look to it that this blood which was shed in expiation does not become thy accuser!

XXVI. Time and Place of the Incarnation.

"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son."—Gal. iv. 4.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Time of Christ's birth given by St. Paul, Gal. iv. 4. Generally believed to be in the midst of the earth's years. Reasons for this: 1. Foretold by the Prophet. 2. Then the greatness of the grace would be all the more appreciated. 3. Man would be prepared for the coming of the Redeemer. 4. Justice of God demanded this. If Christ had delayed His coming till the end of time, man would have despaired.

II. Place of Christ's birth. Nazareth as related by St. Luke. This humble place was chosen: 1. To show to the world Christ's humility. 2. To show that He was to redeem all nations. 3. As a type of Himself as the flower of the world. (Cant. ii. 1.)

III. The care which Divine Providence has over the Holy House of Nazareth.

Who is He that made the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak? Did the prophets foretell this of Him, or are these His works? Is He already born, or is He yet to be born? Where was He born? I will answer these questions to-day. They concern Him of whom we have already spoken, who, out of unspeakable love toward us, left the glory of heaven, became man, subjected Himself to the cross and passion, to lessen our cross and sufferings, to redeem us from sin and everlasting torment, and to make us eternally happy. I shall speak therefore again of the Incarnation of Christ, and I will explain to you to-day:

I. When Christ became man.
II. Where Christ became man.

I. To the first question the Apostle St. Paul answers: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem those who were under the law." These words contain everything that I wish to speak of to-day. Therefore we will explain them one after the other.

First of all, St. Paul says: "When the fulness of time was come," that is to say: "When the time which God had decreed from all eternity for the Incarnation of His Son had arrived, when the hour was at hand when God was to abolish the old Law and begin the new one of grace, that we might be lifted out of the state of slavery into which we had fallen by sin and be reinstated in the freedom of faith and the sonship of God, then God sent His Son

into the world. This time was accomplished when, as it is generally accepted, the world was in the midst of the years which are appointed for its duration. This was foretold by the prophet Habacuc: "In the midst of the years thou shalt make it known," i. e., the work of the redemption. But why was it just at that time and not earlier or later? Hereupon theologians make answer, that it was not befitting that Christ should become man either at the beginning of the world or at the end, for the following reasons:

1. It was not befitting at the beginning of the world. For the sending of Jesus Christ to redeem the world was the greatest grace that God could show to men. But they were not to be indifferent to this great grace, but to acknowledge this blessing. They were to pray for it beforehand and in vain, so that they might learn to appreciate it all the more. For this reason God allowed them to live for a long time in unbelief, that they might perceive how miserable and unhappy they would be when they had lost God. In this way they were to attain an ardent desire for the true God; for God wished first to make Himself known to them again, to forgive them, and to attract them to Himself by truth and grace. But God would not have attained this end if Christ had become Incarnate in the beginning of the world, immediately after the fall.

Secondly, the world was to be made acquainted with the appearance of the Redeemer beforehand, so that it might the more easily know Him, and prepare itself worthily for His blessed arrival. To this end God raised up the prophets, men enlightened by the Holy Ghost, who were to prophesy to the people in the most exact and precise way the advent of the Messias, His miraculous conception, His birth, His life, His passion and death, His future glory.

Thirdly, the justice of God wished that mankind for a certain period of time should be sensible of the punishments and afflictions brought down by the commission of sin, and thus be led to penance. This punishment was to intensify in man the longing for the Redeemer, and place him in the right condition when Christ's coming should help them. For he who imagines he knows everything, requires no teacher; and he who considers himself in good health, does not call in the physician; and when the child thinks it can walk alone, it pushes away the hand that is leading it. But those who are sensible of their ignorance, their maladies, and

dangers, their helplessness, ardently desire a helper, and receive the helper and his assistance with pleasure, as soon as he appears. For this reason then God permitted the earth to bring forth thorns and thistles and constrained man to do laborious work. God made the fruitfulness of the fields dependent upon the warmth and dew and rain of heaven; but taught man to know his nothingness. He was to humble himself, he must pray, must believe and trust, must receive, return thanks, and love. By all of these things God desired to excite in the hearts of mankind an ardent longing for redemption, and therefore He could not become Incarnate immediately after the fall, but only later. "He has done all things well."

2. Now, as it was not befitting that He should become man immediately after the fall, neither could this take place suitably at the end of the world.

Oppressed by the feeling of guilt, worried by the knowledge of their sinfulness and helplessness, tormented by a thousand sufferings of this life, and being incapable thereby of helping or saving themselves, mankind must have despaired of all redemption. For sin and corruption having once come upon human nature, sin became always more frequent, immorality always greater, corruption always more general, the world ever more ungodly. For faith and knowledge vanished more and more, unbelief and heresy on the contrary increased, so that, with the exception of Judea, almost the whole earth was plunged into idolatry when Christ became man. Now, if Christ had delayed His coming until the end of the world, in Judea also in all probability there would have been no one who believed in the true God, and thus the devil would have asserted his dominion over the whole earth. Hence you perceive that the right time for the Incarnation of Christ was when the world was in the middle of its existence, when the seventy weeks foretold by Daniel were accomplished, and upon earth a spotless man was wedded to an immaculate Virgin. At that time "God sent His Son, made of a woman," of the most pure Virgin Mary. But where did this take place?

II. It took place at Nazareth, a little town of Galilee. For so the Evangelist St. Luke tells us: "The angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph" (Luke i. 26). This place was chosen by the Son of God from amongst all the cities of all countries and kingdoms, to be honored by His Incarnation. Why

was this? 1. "He chose this city as a type of His humility." Nazareth was a little town unimportant and very little known. Not a single prophet had it brought forth, nor was it celebrated for any reason whatsoever. At the time of Christ's birth it had become almost proverbial as an emblem of contempt. For this reason therefore Nathaniel said to Philip: "Can anything of good come from Nazareth?" (John i. 46). His first dwelling place therefore was to be a sign of His humility. He wished thereby to teach us that contempt of all earthly grandeur of which later on as a teacher in public He so frequently reminded us. "Learn of me," said He, "for I am meek and humble of heart." O dear Christians! how far above God do we not exalt ourselves by a proud and haughty spirit! Every one strives to be at the top, always above others! Some are ashamed of their origin, others of their position, others of their family, others of their service, their poverty, or small income. Hardly any one wants to be what he is! and yet—Christ became man, although He is God. He wished to be a Nazarene, although from all eternity He was the Son of the heavenly Father and Ruler of the whole world. Do not be ashamed, therefore, of your state, but rather of your pride, which is an infernal vice and may cause your damnation!

2. Christ chose little Nazareth as a type of His vocation to redeem the whole world. Nazareth was situated on the border of Judea next to the territory which was under pagan dominion. It lay, therefore, almost in the center between believers and unbelievers. Now Christ became man for the salvation of all the peoples of the earth, heathens as well as Jews. For this reason He desired, as it were, to be between believers and unbelievers, to show thereby that the fruit of His incarnation was to belong to one as well as to the other.

3. Christ chose little Nazareth as a type of Himself. Nazareth means flower. Christ was the first flower which bloomed again in that Paradise which was shut by the Cherubim. Therefore He says of Himself: "I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys" (Cant. ii. 1). Hence He willed to be conceived in the season of flowers, at that time of the year, namely, when the soft breath of spring unfolds the flowers of the earth, to rejoice thereby all hearts, to refresh and to attract them.

For these reasons Christ willed to be conceived at Nazareth, of Mary, the most pure Virgin. She was absorbed in prayer when

the angel of the Lord approached her and brought her the message that she would conceive of the Holy Ghost the promised Redeemer. Hardly had she heard this mystery than she gave her consent with that: "Be it done to me according to thy word," upon which the salvation of the world depended. At that same moment the Holy Ghost formed in her most pure womb a human body into which He breathed a reasonable soul; the Divine Word came from heaven, united himself with body and soul, and thus by the operation of the Holy Ghost did God become man. Without doubt God, the Lord of this house wherein Mary conceived Christ, willed that it should be perpetually known and gratefully venerated by all people, for He has preserved it to this day uninjured throughout the storms of so many centuries. This house stood for a long while at Nazareth where it was discovered by St. Helena whilst traveling in the Holy Land. She caused a magnificent church to be reared over it. When, however, this was destroyed by the Turks at the time of the crusades, angels carried the house away to protect it from destruction on the night of May 12, 1291, to an eminence in Dalmatia. No one there was able to account for its sudden appearance, until the Blessed Virgin herself appeared to the bishop who was sick, and explained to him that the house was the dwelling of Nazareth. As proof of the truth of her words the Blessed Virgin delivered him from his incurable malady. Although this statement was worthy of belief, still it was desired to examine into the matter more thoroughly. For this reason a delegation was sent to Nazareth which was to examine thoroughly whether the foundation of the house which remained at Nazareth, particularly the kind of stone, and the measurements corresponded exactly. An answer was given in the affirmative, and the people resolved to erect a church over the house, but it was suddenly lifted up into the air by angels and carried over the Adriatic Sea to the coast of Italy, where it was deposited on the property of two brothers, and thence borne to Loretto in the then Papal States. There it stands to this day, and every year it is visited by thousands from all the countries of the earth, who moisten the ground with their tears, and in the course of centuries their footsteps have made furrows in the flooring. O, who may describe the feelings of the devout pilgrim, whose eyes on entering this house are confronted with these words: "Here the Word was made flesh."

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

XXVII. The Love of the Most Holy Trinity Manifested in the Incarnation.

"For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son."—St. John iii. 16.

SYNOPSIS.—The story of King Alphonsus and his son. The love of God the Father manifested in the Incarnation. He gave up His only Son whom He loved so tenderly and who was equal to Him in power, majesty, wisdom, and glory. The love of the Son shown in the ardent desire He had from all eternity to redeem us. To do this He took the form not of an angel or archangel, but of man. He came into this world as an infant and spared not Himself in order to save us. The love of the Holy Ghost manifested in the prayer for our salvation—in the virginal conception of Christ and in the adorning with grace the soul of Mary His Spouse.

King Alphonsus, of Spain, at one time defended himself and his people with great bravery in a city, which was besieged by the Moors. It happened that at a sally from the fortress his only son was taken captive by the enemy. With this prize in their hands the Moors considered the city conquered. They led the captive as near as possible to the city walls, so that he could be plainly seen by the king, and called out, "Alphonsus, surrender the city, or your son must die!" What a horrible position for a king and father! What a painful choice, either to deliver his people to servitude into the hands of the tyrant, or to surrender his only beloved son as a bloody sacrifice! Parental love and patriotism fought long and fiercely in the heart of the king, but finally Alphonsus threw his own sword over the city wall and exclaimed, "I would rather that my son should die and my people live!" My dear people, is not this true of what happened at the Incarnation of the Son of God? For four thousand years God's people, His beloved human race, had been held captive by Divine justice, when the cry penetrated heaven: "Either deliver the human race to its merited punishment or Thy Son must die!" And behold! An unfathomable miracle of love! God says, "My Son shall die and man shall live! Take Him, my innocent, only-begotten, much-beloved Son, mock Him, scourge Him, crucify Him, but man shall be redeemed, shall live and not be lost!"

The Incarnation was, therefore, a work of Divine love and not a

consequence of any merit of our own. Let us to-day contemplate this love of the Holy Trinity, namely, the love of:

I. The Father.
II. The Son.
III. The Holy Ghost.

I. It is certain, my dear people, that God could not have loved us with a more tender or more ardent love than when He gave us His own beloved Son as our Redeemer. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—they have performed the grandest act love is capable of. As regards God the Father, He has shown by surrendering His Son to us such a love that Christ Himself said in wonderment, "God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son—i. e., the best, the grandest, the most beloved He had—for the salvation of the world!" What a sacrifice of love! The Father gives up His Son for the redemption of man, that miserable, obstinate, and sin-corrupted creature, whose body is food for worms and whose soul is a firebrand for hell, and who He foresees will repay this sacrifice of love with renewed disgrace, dishonor, and sin. What a sacrifice of love, of the most exalted love! For what greater gift could there have been than the gift of the heavenly Father, who gives His own Son, the Son who is as closely connected with Him as thought is with the human mind; who is the same with Him in eternity, of the same nature, of equal sovereignty, power, and majesty! He does not sacrifice an angel, or archangel, or a cherub—would not that indeed have been a great sacrifice?—but He gives Him who is infinitely more than the holy choir of all the angels, and who is adored by the cherubim and seraphim as their Lord and Creator. Oh, what a sacrifice of love! This sacrifice redeems the world from perdition, redeems it from eternal death and the inevitable torment of hell. This sacrifice appeases God, gives satisfaction to His justice and opens the portals to joy, happiness, and eternal glory. For He has sacrificed His Son, so that none who believe in Him shall be lost, but shall merit eternal life. So intensely, so tenderly, so ardently has God loved our souls. What a sacrifice of love. King Alphonsus sacrificed his son for the benefit of his people, and his noble deed is recorded in the annals of history as a model for all kings, as the most beautiful trait of a royal heart.

Abraham willingly sacrificed his son, and God poured the fulness

of heavenly blessings upon his house and his descendants, and to this day He praises through the mouth of His servants this great work of obedience. But do we remember the heavenly Father, who has given us His only-begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sins and for the sake of our salvation? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all comfort" (II. Cor. i. 3). Oh, my dear people, do anything but sin and offend this loving and munificent God!

II. Now let us consider the love of the second Person of the Godhead, the love which the Son of God has proved to us at the Incarnation. God foresaw from eternity the first sin of man, and the horrors which persons of every age, condition, and sex would commit during all ages. He realized that neither angel nor man could give satisfaction to Divine justice, and therefore He realized that man would perish unless one of the Divine Persons became man and gave satisfaction for the race. One of the three Divine Persons, therefore, had to perform this work of satisfaction. Which of them should do it? It befitted most the second Person to do this, because He was the Son of God and could make all of us children and sons of God. And behold! the Son of God offered Himself as a sacrifice and undertook the redemption of man.

Now contemplate what this love of the Son of God was! He had offered Himself to God as a sacrifice of atonement and declared Himself willing to become human, to die and save from eternal death the human family, who would be born thousands of years afterward. He was imbued with this desire, to sacrifice Himself for us long before man was created, before Adam committed the first sin, or the world commenced to exist, and preserved it in Himself for millions of years up to the time of His Incarnation. For that reason He could say through Jeremiah, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. xxxi. 3). Further, the Son of God could have adopted the awe-inspiring figure of an angel, a cherub, or seraph to effect, through the nature of a spirit, the redemption of man. But because it was more befitting that man should rather be redeemed by a man, who was at the same time God, than by an angel, therefore the Son of God became for the love of us, not an angel, but a man. He disdained the spiritual nature of an angel to accept the weak and perishable nature of man. Is this not unselfish love? But more. If He decided to become man, could He not have united Himself with a human nature which

stood in the full vigor of manhood, in glory and authority, in the midst of royal splendor? But no; to make us take cognizance all the more of His infinite love, He wanted to subject Himself, as far as possible, to the frailty of human nature, to remain without the stirring of hand or foot and without the use of eyes or mouth in the virginal womb of the Mother of God until His birth, although He was in the fullest possession of His Divine reason and would not avoid the helplessness and poverty of a little infant. And to fill the measure of His love to the brim—although He foresaw from eternity that in spite of His labors and His tribulations, in spite of His death upon the cross, many would perish and only a few would partake of the fruits of His Redemption—He would, nevertheless, for the sake of the few souls, become man and undergo the same martyrdom as if He were to make the whole human race blessed. O, what an abundance of love! To him who knows of this love of the Son of God and is still not afraid, to blaspheme, to curse, to rage and sin against this love, St. Paul says rightly, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (I. Cor. xvi. 22).

III. The Holy Ghost, too, has shown in the Incarnation of the Son of God no less a love than the two other Persons of the Holy Trinity. A threefold efficacy, which He has demonstrated in the following manner, is peculiar to the Holy Ghost.

The first is the ardent prayer which He has said for the sake of our salvation. For as St. Paul says, "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings" (Rom. viii. 26). By this prayer we have become partakers of the Incarnation of Christ. On account of this prayer the seventy weeks were shortened and the epoch, when the mystery of the Incarnation was to take place, hastened. Through this prayer He has also given others the grace to pray so much more devoutly and to merit this grace.

The second efficacy of the Holy Ghost is the accomplishment of extraordinary acts and miracles. This power of the Holy Ghost is demonstrated most particularly in the Incarnation of Christ. The angel Gabriel himself has pronounced this clearly. When the conception of a son seemed to be an impossibility to the Virgin Mary, the angel replied to her, "The power of the Most High shall overshadow thee" (St. Luke i. 35), i. e., the Holy Ghost will come upon thee. It will be He who will accomplish this work. He will form

the body of the child from thy own purest blood and provide it with all members without the action of any human body.

The Holy Ghost it was too who accomplished the miracle of uniting the human and Divine nature in Christ. He adorned the humanity of Christ with those graces and virtues which we admire in it. By an inconceivable miracle He combined in the Blessed Virgin virginity and motherhood. He united two infinitely different natures, the Divine and human nature, as closely as is the unity of body and soul. By this union it has become a truth that the Lord became a servant, God became man!

The third efficacy of the Holy Ghost is the guidance and instruction of those souls who are destined for great things. This efficacy, too, He manifested in the mystery of the Incarnation. For He imparted to the soul of Mary that plenitude of grace which made her fit to conceive and give birth to the Son of God. All this happened for the love of man by the three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

SUNDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

XXVIII. The Rewarding and Punishing Justice of God.

"God will render to every man according to his works."—St. Matt. xvi. 27.

SYNOPSIS.—I. God rewards every good action. God must reward every good action, not because He is supreme, but because He has promised to do so. This promise extorted by His infinite love of man. The many promises made by man to God—the small number of them ever redeemed.

II. God must likewise punish all evil—this is demanded by the Justice of God—for the sinner (1) turns his back on God; (2) contemns God; (3) uses God's power against Himself; (4) destroys the fruits of Christ's passion and death; (5) desires the destruction of God.

The merited punishment comes not only in the next world, where it is given in all its fullness, but also here in this world. Yet God is ever patient and waits long for the sinner. God's justice vindicated before the world on the last day.

O, how much is God the Lord pleased with obedience and gratitude! Ten men, who were afflicted with the most horrible leprosy, saw Jesus approaching, and called to Him from afar, "Master, have mercy on us!" But He would not heal them on their mere asking; the healing should cost them something, and be caused by their own

effort. He therefore sent them to the priests, as it was written in the law that all lepers should show themselves to the priests to be declared by them clean or unclean. When He saw that they obeyed His command in faith and confidence, He spoke His almighty "I will," and they became clean. They were made clean, therefore, as a reward for their obedience and their faith. But nine of these men forgot their benefactor, and went their way without thanking Him. This ingratitude touched the Lord most grievously.

Thus it is, my dear people, if man has done good, he will be rewarded; if he does evil, all the good which he has done will not be considered, nor will he escape punishment. For God is a righteous judge, who rewards the good and punishes the evil.

With this we have arrived at the fifth point of the teachings of our faith, the knowledge of which is indispensably necessary for every faithful Christian. According to this fifth point, we believe that the same God who created, maintains, and governs everything, who became man to redeem us, rewards all good and punishes all evil. Either here or hereafter, in life or in death, in time or eternity, "He will render to every man according to his works." He will strictly:

I. Reward all good.
II. Punish all evil.

This I will show you to-day.

I. God is the rewarder of all good. This is as certain and as necessary as it is certain and necessary that God is just. "His hand," says David, with which He maintains, guides, and governs everything, with which He rewards and chastises, heals and wounds, "is full of justice."

In accordance with this justice, God rewards all good works abundantly, even the meanest and smallest, yes, indeed He is obliged to do this.

"Obliged to do this?" you may ask in astonishment. It is true that God, considered by and in Himself, does not owe anything to anybody. For we men are all, with our works, our rights, and our strength, God's property, because we have received everything, even to the hair on our heads, from Him. As the tree with all its fruit is the property of him who has planted it, so do we entirely belong to God and are more subject to Him than the meanest slave to his

master. We can give Him nothing that does not already belong to Him, because we do not own ourselves, but belong to Him with body and soul for thousands of reasons. For this reason we, on our part, have no right to ask God for anything, and God on His part is not obliged to give us anything.

If He, nevertheless, rewards all services which we render to Him, and rewards them of necessity, this does not happen, because He is obliged to pay this debt to us, but because He has engaged Himself, of His own free will, and given us the promise to reward all works which are accomplished in His honor. Therefore we can not say to Him, " Lord, give back to us what thou hast received and what is our due," but " Give us what thou has promised." But why should God have made such a promise? Is not our whole being bound to render Him every possible service for creating and maintaining us, without receiving any reward? What could have induced Him to make this promise to reward us for our labors? It is the infinite love for us which is inseparably united with His being which has caused it. It is His unbounded Fatherly love with which He is attached to us men; for the whole Godhead has exhausted its treasures for the salvation of mankind. It was the thought that it was befitting to reward with blessings those zealous, high-minded souls who have steadfastly labored in His service and who have spent their whole lives in doing His will and promoting His honor. This holy zeal, this indefatigable solicitude which we manifest in the service of God and the works we do for the love of Him, appear in the sight of God in such a beautiful light, that at the sight of them He forgets, as it were, that He has a right to demand from us all we have, and because of this He has engaged Himself to reward us, who owe everything to Him. God does not wish to be surpassed by any creature in charity and benefactions. The more generous man is to God, the more generous will God prove Himself to him. And He holds to this so faithfully that He will not let go unrewarded even the most insignificant deed. For a single drink of water which we give to the poor for the love of Him, He promises us eternal life. There is no sigh of devotion so brief, no work so hidden, no suffering so insignificant, that God does not repay with an excessively great reward. Indeed, it often happens that His reward is twofold, i. e., temporal happiness and peace of mind and afterward eternal glory and heavenly joy. "Oh, how good is our God!" He has no gain, no profit from our good works, and yet He esteems

them so highly, that He rewards them with the kingdom of heaven. But how do we fulfil our duties to Him? Do we also keep faithfully what we have promised Him, and which we are in justice bound to do? What grand promises do we not make when we are in want or danger or stricken down with sickness? "Oh, my God," we exclaim then, "save me this time, and I promise I will be different. I will live temperately, piously, and chastely. I will pray, go to church regularly, keep all the fasts and perform great acts of charity." Beautiful promises! How are they kept? Badly enough in most cases, sometimes not at all. When the bird soars again in the free air, its song is entirely different from what it has learned while in the cage. But God will not let this pass unavenged. As His justice rewards the good, so it also punishes all evil.

II. Yes, God must punish. He must avenge the injury which is done to Him by those who lead a life contrary to the law of God, and who seek happiness in things which have been forbidden him by his Lord and Master. As the law of a country uses its authority to punish transgressors and protect the right, so must God chastise all sinners, those enemies of His kingdom, with the sword of His justice. This is demanded by His justice. For, firstly, every sinner wishes that God be not God, or, rather, be not the only God. They swear by the Lord and swear by the devil, with whom they share their heart and to whom they sacrifice their best part—the soul. And, secondly, every sinner shows as much contempt for God as he would for the meanest creature; he imagines that he is a god himself, and says in his heart, like the heathen Pharao, "I know not the Lord" (Exod. v. 2). "Whose law is binding on me? My will, my desire, is my law." What else does this mean than making a god of oneself? For God has no law-giver besides Himself, and is law in Himself. Thirdly, the sinner uses God's omnipotence to carry on his sins and injustices. Fourthly, the sinner destroys all usefulness and the most noble fruit of the bitter passion of Jesus Christ, who suffered death on the cross for the salvation of all and to free men from the consequences of sin. "And this is all the fruit, that the sin thereof should be taken away" (Is. xxvii. 9). Instead, then, of sharing in the benefit of the suffering of Jesus Christ, the sinner heaps guilt upon guilt and casts himself into perdition despite the painful suffering of his Redeemer. Fifthly, the sinner annihilates not only the effect of the suffering of Jesus Christ, but if it were possible for him to do so, he would destroy God

Himself. Each mortal sin has in it, as St. Thomas says, such malice, as to annihilate, if this were possible, God Himself. Sin wishes nothing but that God's omnipotence, wisdom, and justice should vanish, so that God would not be aware of the crime and unable to punish it.

For this reason the sinner deserves the greatest contempt, the most painful torment, the bitterest loss, deserves, in fact, everything that is against his own desire and conformable to the Divine will.

And God fulfils this by His punishing justice. Sin meets its punishment even in this life. But the sinner will receive his final punishment before the eyes of all people on the day of judgment.

God does not always punish all evil deeds here on earth. He overlooks, so to say, for a time many sins and vices of man, and contemplates them patiently. "The mercy of the Lord is great" (Ecclus v. 6).

Where would the whole world be, where would so many thousands of sinners be who are living at this moment, if God had punished each sin as soon as it was committed? Where would so many thousands of holy souls be who were sinners once, but are now saints in heaven? He waits, so that the sinner may be converted and do penance; but if the sinner fails to do this, vengeance will surely come. And it will come so much the harder and greater and heavier the longer repentance has been delayed. Now, the sword of Divine justice is hidden by the sheath of mercy, but there comes a time when this sheath will fall away and the naked sword of justice be drawn against all transgressors, when everybody who has been spared will receive his just reward. "It will be rendered to every one according to his works."

Then the angels of heaven, the just of the earth, and the devils in hell, the former with surpassing joy and the latter with unspeakable sorrow, will give testimony and exclaim, "The Lord is just and he hath loved justice from all eternity."

PENTECOST.

XXIX. Particular Judgment.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." —Heb. ix. 27.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Besides the general judgment held on the last day, there will be a particular judgment. When? Immediately after death. This is proven by the testimony of St. Augustine, by the Scriptural account of Lazarus and by reason. Our Lord's loving advice to watch and be prepared.

II. This judgment shall take place at the spot where the soul becomes free from the body. Those present with the soul shall be Christ, who as Judge shall pronounce sentence; the devil as accuser; the angel guardian as advocate, and conscience manifesting our deeds.

We shall be judged for all thoughts, words, deeds, omissions. St. Charles Borromeo's dying words. Three things feared by the Abbot Elias.

Taking into contemplation to-day the particular judgment, let us ask:

I. When shall this particular judgment take place? and
II. Where shall it be held?

I. We must know before all that there will be a twofold judgment, a particular and a general judgment. God will hold for every man a particular or secret judgment. This is the teaching of the Apostle, as well as the teaching of the holy fathers. St. Thomas says clearly, "Besides the particular judgment, which takes place directly after the death of every man, there will also be a general judgment." And again, "As soon as the soul leaves the human body, it is irrevocably assigned to an abiding place. It receives its judgment—either for life or for death, according to its works." All its thoughts, words, and actions during life will be judged in accordance with the way they presented themselves to God at the moment when they happened. Consequently, this particular judgment takes place at the time when we depart from this life, at the very moment when the soul is separated from the body. "It is a most reasonable and wholesome belief," writes St. Augustine, "that the souls are judged at the time when they are separated from their bodies, before they come to that judgment by which they will be judged again, after

they have been reunited with their former bodies. To prove this, the same holy father relates the parable from the Gospel, in which Christ tells of the rich Dives and the poor Lazarus. The Scripture says of these two, that the rich man, as soon as he died, was thrown into hell, while the pious Lazarus was, after his death, borne by the angels into the bosom of Abraham. From this St. Augustine draws the conclusion, that undoubtedly it can not depend upon the mere will of man after death whether he shall go to heaven—if this were so they would all want to go there—and it is just as reasonable that nobody would, of his own free will, go into hell and subject himself to the thraldom of the devil. If, then, the rich Dives was thrown into hell immediately after death and the pious Lazarus was taken to heaven, it follows, necessarily, that immediately after death the soul of every man will be judged in particular, and after this judgment be assigned either to heaven or to hell. If this judgment was postponed until the last day or the day of the general judgment, then on the one hand the just souls would be left in unceasing anxiety, not knowing whether they would pass the judgment, and on the other hand, the godless would still be left in the hope of being saved. Therefore, for a long time, there would be no difference between the two; both would linger between fear and hope, as neither of them would be sure whether they were to be saved or lost. And this is contrary to the justice of God, who can not allow those who have offended Him to be treated the same as those who have served Him.

Therefore, it is certain that at the moment of our death our soul will be judged in accordance with our merits, judged for all eternity. Eternal life or eternal death will be the unalterable decision. Oh, what a terrible moment, upon which the whole of eternity depends! Who would not quake and tremble at this and keep it unceasingly before his mind, as no one can tell the day or hour of his death, and therefore does not know how soon he may be called before this judgment. Therefore our future judge admonishes us kind-heartedly and cordially, when He says, "Watch ye therefore, for you know not when the Lord of the house cometh; at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning" (St. Mark xiii. 35). So much of the time when this particular judgment will take place.

II. As regards the place where this judgment shall be passed, we must not think that the souls are carried up to heaven and there

placed before the throne of God. No, a stained soul will never, in all eternity, have the happiness of feeling even for one moment the delights of heavenly joys; each soul will receive its judgment at the same place where the body happened to be at the time of death, be it on water or on land, in bed or in the street, on the mountain or in the valley, in the fields or in the house. For God is everywhere. For this reason can He, without calling the soul into heaven or having to descend Himself from heaven, pronounce His judgment over each one for eternal life or death at the place where it became separated from the body and make the soul cognizant of such judgment.

At this judgment Jesus Christ shall appear as judge, the soul as the accused, the angel who was its guardian as advocate, and the devil as accuser. The latter will bring forward everything that the soul had committed during its life on earth in thought, word, or deed against God, against itself and against its neighbors, either in intent or in reality. He will—and this should be borne well in mind—bring forward not only the evil which has been committed, but also the good deeds which the soul might have done and which it left undone or did badly. When St. Charles Borromeo was on his death-bed, he said to the priest who attended him, "Reverend brother, I am afraid to appear before the judgment more on account of the good which I have left undone than the evil I have done." And yet, what a pious and holy life had Borromeo led! How many good deeds this man had done during his whole life! Remember, often, that you will be accused by the devil and condemned by Christ not only for sins committed, but also for good deeds omitted.

Against this accuser there is given to each soul an advocate, that angel namely who was its true companion and guardian during its pilgrimage through life. He on his side will also bring forward everything good the soul has done. Every good thought, every sigh, breath, or step, which was done with a pure intention for the love of God or our neighbor will be recorded. He will try to cover the imperfections of these works with the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, and will, to frustrate the efforts of the accuser and move the judge to mercy, remind the latter of the most precious blood which He has shed for each accused soul.

The witnesses at this judgment will be the clear and unerring perception which each soul will have in the most perfect degree. As clear as the sun will appear before its eyes the actions of a life-

time. All covering will be withdrawn and the soul will see all its words, its works, and thoughts, its good and evil deeds in their true light as they appeared in the eyes of God. It will see, whether it is rich in merits or poor, whether it is worthy of heaven or deserving of hell. In this clear self-recognition one's own conscience will give testimony either for or against, and convicted by its own conscience, the soul will not be able to offer excuses but will make a most complete confession. Thereupon, the Judge, who is none else than He who was our Redeemer, will by virtue of His Divine power, His omniscience, and justice, render without delay the irrevocable sentence, which will be life or death for all eternity. If we are declared as blessed, we shall also be deemed worthy of heaven on the second and general judgment day, but if the verdict decrees our eternal perdition, we sall receive the same sentence at the last judgment.

"Oh, how dreadful it is to fall into the hands of the living God." And with each minute this terrible moment comes nearer and nearer. Every minute may bring us the verdict, "Eternal life or eternal death!" For we do not know whether we shall not be in the next moment a prey of death. With great earnestness St. James reminds us, therefore, "Behold the judge standet! before the door" (St. James v. 9).

Yes, my dear friends, He stands before our door, before your door, and before my door! As soon as he enters, the time of activity is passed and He demands an accounting of our lives. What will be our fate?

In conclusion, I will mention to you three thoughts of the holy abbot Elias to ponder over. He used to say, "There are three things I am afraid of. The first is when my soul will separate from my body; the second, when I shall have to appear before God my Judge; and the third, when judgment will be passed on me." Remember well these three points. He who will think over them several times a day will lose all desire to do evil.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

XXX. Purgatory.

"Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence, till thou repay the last farthing."—Matt. v. 26.

SYNOPSIS.—I. The three states in the life to come, one of which is allotted to each soul after judgment. The existence of purgatory proved (1) from reason, i. e., from the Justice and Holiness of God; (2) from the Words of Christ, Matt. v. 25; xii. 32; (3) from the condition of things in this world.

II. What this punishment is—a cleansing. Its intensity seen from words of St. Augustine, St. Anselm, St. Gregory. Increased by not knowing when it shall end. Experience tells us of the dreadful pain of fire. All must suffer here, for all need purification. We are too forgetful of those who are there.

Every soul will be judged immediately after death, and shall then take its abode in heaven, in hell, or in purgatory. For, first, there are souls who die without the least stain of sin upon them; for instance, baptized children under age, the souls of the holy martyrs or other Christians who lived pure and innocent lives for the love of Christ, or who did penance in this life for their misdeeds. Heaven is reserved for such as these. Second, there are souls snatched away in a moment by death and sent before the tribunal of God in a state of mortal sin which they did not or would not repent of, and for these hell is prepared. Third, there are souls who quit this life without grievous sin, but still not quite free from stain, and these have lesser sins upon them or they have not atoned for the temporal punishment due their sins, and for these there is a place of purification—purgatory. The holy martyr, Justinian, expresses this very plainly: As soon as the souls are separated from the body, there takes place the separation of the just from the unjust, and each one will be allotted to the abode corresponding to its state—some to heaven, others to hell, and again others to purgatory.

To one of these places we shall go after the first judgment. Now what can be more profitable for us than to learn something about these places? I will, therefore, show you to-day:

I. That there is a purgatory.
II. What it consists of.

I. It is conformable to reason that there is a purgatory. We know that God is just and that He will render to every one according to his works. But there are many who live upon this earth in sin and vice, still they are converted upon their death bed and obtain God's grace by a sincere repentance. God can not reject them in this condition, or cast them into hell. But can He admit them into heaven immediately? Shall they enjoy eternal life as soon as a just man who has passed his whole life in the practice of virtue, mortification, and self-denial? Would that be just?

Our Saviour Himself, in His discourses, declared plainly the doctrine of purgatory. One day He said to the assembled multitude, "Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest, perhaps, the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Amen, I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence, till thou repay the last farthing" (Matt. v. 25, 26). What kind of prison could Christ have alluded to here? asks St. Bernardinus. These words can certainly not mean an earthly prison, because on earth all the evildoers and criminals are not thrown into prison. Hell can not be meant by this prison; for in hell there is no possibility of paying the last farthing, and there is no hope of deliverance. What prison is it then? It is only the prison of purgatory out of which there is any possibility of deliverance when satisfaction has been made to the Divine justice for sin.

And again, Christ said to His disciples upon one occasion, "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come" (Matt. xii. 32). Now, as every man, as St. John says, is a sinner, and falls frequently during his life, if not into grievous sins at least into lesser ones, as many will not atone for these sins upon earth, it follows that they must do so in another world before they can go into heaven, where nothing defiled can enter. But where can they receive pardon after death, and where can they atone? In hell? Certainly not, for that is only for those who depart this life in mortal sin; and there is no deliverance from hell, neither is there any forgiveness of sins. There must, therefore, be a place where venial sins are forgiven, the minor indebtedness expiated, and perfect purity attained; and this place is purgatory. Why is it called purgatory?

II. St. Paul instructs us upon this point in the Epistle to the Corinthians, where he writes, "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble" (i. e., defective works), "he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire" (I. Cor. iii. 12-15).

St. Paul indicates to us by this the condition of purgatory, and he says that the cleansing in the same takes place by fire. I know that there are many who take little heed of this fire, and do not take the slightest pains to escape it. They commit venial sins a hundred times a day without fear and say, "What does it matter, so long as I do not go to hell?" God grant that you be not mistaken! The holy fathers speak very differently. "Let every one strive with all strength," writes St. Augustine, "to avoid grievous sin, and to atone for lesser sins by good works, so that nothing may remain of them that will have to be consumed in purgatory. This cleansing fire is more painful than all the torments which we can see, feel, or imagine." St. Gregory expresses himself in like manner, "I consider that this transitory fire is more insupportable than all the afflictions of this earth; for as the unjust, so also will the just be tormented by this fire, only with this difference, that the purifying will not endure eternally." St. Anselm also writes, "That the least suffering of a poor soul is greater than the most intense agony we can think of here." For here upon earth the soul only feels that sensitive pain through the body. The more hardened the latter is, the more accustomed it becomes to pain; so much less does the soul feel the suffering of the body. The more delicate, on the contrary, the more sensitive the members of the body are, so much the more does the soul feel those sufferings which afflict it. What torture, then, must it not be when the soul, which is the direct seat of all sensation in us, is tormented by flames of fire.

This agony is intensified by the fact that no soul knows how long it will have to endure its sufferings. As soon as it is separated from the body, all desires for earthly possessions vanish, as well as all those things which were the delight of the body. The soul knows only one aspiration, only one ardent desire, and that is the longing for God, who alone can satisfy, whilst everything that surrounded it has perished. What a torment it is to be irresistibly impelled by this perpetual longing, when it beholds itself so far removed from Him who alone can content it. Look at the sick man! Violent pains rack him, sleep is banished from his pillow,

he knows no rest; he rolls from one side to the other, every moment seems to him an hour, and he is continually asking those about him if it is not yet day. O, how often will the suffering souls ask their guardian angel this same question, When will the hour of my deliverance come? How long must I still remain here? Alas! no one answers! They only know this: that the greater the number of sins the longer will they have to remain in the fire of purification. Just try and hold your finger for half a minute over the flame of a candle! Can you bear the pain? What then must it be to have to endure this agony for a whole day, a year, a hundred years? Surely the greatest of all pains is that caused by fire! And this suffering we must all undergo. For "who is so perfect," writes St. Bernard, "who so holy, that when he departs from this life he will not owe something to that fire?" Who cleanses himself so perfectly from the dross of sin as to be able to say, "My heart is unspotted, and I am free from sin"?

What will happen to us that day, dear brethren? How long shall we have to burn? How long have our parents, brothers, sisters, relations already been burning, and how much longer will they have to burn? How many parents are wringing their hands there below, and crying out, "Children, have pity upon us!" Alas poor father! poor mother! your children have not even time to take compassion upon their own souls! They think solely of pleasures, of friends, of society, etc., and forget that the day of the Lord is likewise coming for them, and that they shall have to suffer in expiation of the sins they think so little of now.

XXXI. Hell.

"Their portion shall be in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."—Apoc. xxi. 8.

SYNOPSIS.—There are two deaths; a first death and a second death. The first is the inevitable lot of every human being. No one can escape it. It must and will come to all—to the old and to the young; the middle-aged and to the infant; to the rich and to the poor; to the good and to the wicked, and may come at any moment. This first death will be followed by either a second life or a second death—both eternal. First death, the penalty of original sin. Second death, the penalty of actual sin, unrepented of and unpardoned. Consequences of the second death. 1. Loss of eternal happiness. 2. Condemnation to eternal suffering. Pain of loss and the pain of bodily suffering. Conclusion: All during this present life are free to choose between Eternal Life and the Second Death.

Everybody must pay this debt to nature and surrender his life into the hands of death, whether father or mother, brother or sister, husband or wife, king or beggar, priest or layman—it makes no difference, all must drink the chalice of death, some at a ripe age, some in the lovely heyday of youth, like the son of the widow of Naim! And the unalterable judgment of death is already pronounced over them all. One after the other lies down on his bed of sickness, is carried out, and lowered into the grave. Every day it is somebody else's turn, and yet, most people do not trouble themselves about it, live on in sin and vice, and say to themselves: "Well, if I die, I die; what does it matter? I can only die once!" "Only die once?" Yes, indeed, if we human beings were to die like the animal at the slaughter-house, that can expect no other pleasure than that which has been its portion in life, and no suffering but that which is inflicted upon it by its manner of death, then it would be right to say: "If I die, I die; what does it matter?" But it is different with us. After our present life there follows another life, after our death another death. And this second life or second death is what stands before us. One or the other we shall begin in eternity, but never end; one or the other will be our inevitable fate, and the first judgment will announce to us whether eternal life or eternal death shall be our portion. Is there, then, a second death? Yes, indeed, there is a second, an eternal death! For St. John says: "But to the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their portion shall be in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Apoc. xxi. 8).

It is of this second death that I will speak to-day, and show what it means to die eternally. It is, indeed, horrible to think of it, but it is also wholesome to contemplate it, while there is yet time.

The wages of sin is death. For the Apostle says, "Through sin, death came into the world."

If Adam had not sinned, he would not have deserved death, and we would not have to fear it. But "*statutum est.*" The judgment is rendered, the staff is broken over our heads, our turn must come, we must all die. But it is only that death which brings to an end our temporal life, that death to which Christ Himself had to submit so as to save us from eternal death. This death is indeed a punishment for sin, because it deprives us of our temporal life, but it is at the same time for the pious and the just a reward of their merit, an end of their suffering, the refreshing repose after work, the pathway to glory, the entrance to eternal life. Therefore it is said of them: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps. cxv. 15). Of this death it is not my intention to speak to-day, but rather of that other death, which the Scripture calls the second death, which begins with the demise of a wicked person and lasts without ceasing, without end, for all eternity. This death consists of the two following points:

I. Of the deprivation of eternal life.
II. Of the suffering of tortures through all eternity.

I. As by temporal death the body is made soulless and deprived of life, so is the soul killed by eternal death and deprived of eternal life. This eternal life is none other than the possession of God, the vision of God, the contemplation of His rapturous beauty, the enjoyment of His blessedness and glory, which has never been seen by human eye and can never be conceived by human mind. From this eternal life the second death separates us for all eternity! What a terrible loss! "O beautiful heaven, I have lost thee! Lost thee for an insignificant thing! Lost thee forever without any help!" What frightful memories, to be followed by terrible remorse! What heartbreaking reproaches will arise from the conscience! And these reproaches these remembrances and the knowledge of having lost God and eternal salvation will rend the heart like the fangs of a serpent and cause the most awful tortures which a creature endowed with reason can endure. They are "the worm that never

dies," which forever gnaws at the soul, but never devours it, forever tears at it but never kills it, which never tires and is never satiated.

Oh, if this unfortunate soul could only perish! But its worm never dies and will not let the soul die either, for, as St. Gregory says: "In hell the unfortunate ones find a death without death, an end without end, for their death lives always and their end recommences forever anew." Can there be anything more terrible?

"*Semper et nunquam*" is written in fiery letters over the portals of hell. "Ever and never!" Ever will God and His heaven be lost to them! Never in all eternity will they regain temporal or eternal life, and never in all eternity will they be allowed to merit either. It is just this fact which is the most fearful punishment of a damned soul, that it sees itself deprived of that life to which as its aim and end it has been created by God, and which it could have obtained as easily as the many thousands who rejoice in the possession of it. Oh, if he had only said one single word, taken only one step to make good use of the short span of life—but now nothing more can be done, nothing more for all eternity!

Oh, my dear friends, use the few days which are still given to you to work out your salvation! I say use the time, not pass the time in leisure and idle occupation, and let us say to ourselves: "While there is still time, let us merit eternal life." For verily after this time there will be none other, but a time of pain and torture for all eternity. I can not imagine what those people among you think who day after day, year after year, spend their lives wantonly, as if they had it signed and sealed, that some day they would have plenty of time to repent of their sins, and by such repentance gain eternal life. God forbid that death should overtake them to deprive them not only of their temporal but also of their eternal life!

II. Besides depriving us of eternal life, the second death brings also with it the most terrible bodily torture. The pains of death, which have an end with the departure of bodily life, are renewed and augmented through all eternity by eternal death. These tortures are caused by the glow of the never expiring fire, which, according to the words of Christ, burns in hell. And what kind of fire is this? A fire which in intensity surpasses all the fires of the earth. St. Vincent Ferrer says, "Compared with the fire of hell, the fire of the earth is cold." And with this terrible, inconceivable fire the damned shall be laid as in an oven of fire (Psalm xx. 10).

Fire is above him, under him, round about him, and inside of him. And by this fire he shall be for ever killed and tortured! Oh, if he could only die, this terrible fire would then be extinguished for him, but no; it is the very idea of his despair that he is forever being killed without being able to die. St. Augustine says: "There is no more painful or more cruel death than the one which lasts forever and never dies. For this reason the damned howl and shriek in wild despair for death to come. But that death which would end their torment flees from them and leaves them to the terrors of eternal death." The royal bard David describes this terrible picture in these simple words: "The wicked shall see, and shall be angry; he shall gnash with his teeth, and pine away; the desire of the wicked shall perish" (Psalms clx. 10). You have heard, then, my dear friends, what eternal death is—a deprivation of eternal happiness, a torture without end, a death without dying. All those have to look forward to this terrible death who do not employ this time of grace for repenting their sins, for the performing of good works, and the gaining of eternal life; in short, all those who perish in impenitence before they have had time to make their peace with God. Shall we, my dear people, let it come to that? No! A thousand times no! On the contrary, we will use our best endeavors to escape from this eternal death, even at the cost of our health and life, our temporal possessions, our sweat and blood. All pains and labors are richly rewarded if we can only obtain eternal life. And this we expect in this world at the moment when the soul separates from the body and appears before the judgment seat of God to receive the verdict. Oh, I beg of you, for the sake of your salvation, think daily of this moment and ask yourselves frequently, like the pious hermit: "How, now? How would it be if that moment would come now and thou, my soul, wouldst be called to judgment? What verdict couldst thou expect in the state in which thou art now? Ah, woe is me, that I have lived so long in sin, who may die any moment!" See then, life and death you hold in your own hands. Whichever you grasp you shall have for all eternity! Tremble and choose!

XXXII. Preparation for the Judgment during Life.

"Stand up and prepare thyself."—Jer. xlvi. 14.

SYNOPSIS.—In corporal sickness we expect the physician to give us timely remedies against death; but he may not always be able to do so. In spiritual maladies you look to the minister of God for the remedies. He can always give them, and they will never fail—provided you apply them. The consequence of an adverse judgment is death.

Remedies.—1. "Provide for thy own household"—by frequent examination of conscience and regular reception of the Sacraments. 2. "Let your loins be girded," i. e., carefully avoid the sins of the flesh; and be active in good works. 3. "You shall bear burning lamps in your hands," i. e., the light of good example and of works of charity. 4. Be watchful for the coming of the Lord; and make friends with the Saints of God. Exhortation to devotion to the Blessed Mother of God.

What would a sick person think of a doctor who, while continually talking of the danger of the patient's ailment, of its increasing danger, and of the approach of death, would prescribe no remedy nor use any means toward bettering the condition of his patient? So far I have said to you a great deal about the great danger, which we will have to face some day, about the terrors of the judgment, the sternness of the Judge, of the manner and place of punishment, and of the inevitable lot—either eternal life or eternal death—which will befall every soul. Would it not then be desirable and proper if I should prescribe for you a spiritual remedy, which would enable you to protect yourself from this great danger? If the judgment is so terrible," you may say, "it is for you to tell us what will enable us to make it lighter for us and secure us from its inflictions." Indeed, I know remedies enough which will enable you to pass unscathed through the ordeal of the judgment, but you must use them, or else they would be of as little benefit to you as the strongest medicine would be to a sick man who would always look at it but never take it. The prescription which I give you consists of the few words, "Stand up and prepare thyself," which means, up and prepare yourself for the judgment now while you are living and again at the hour of death. Of this twofold preparation during life and at the hour of death I shall speak to you in this and the next sermon. To-day we will contemplate the preparation for the judgment during life.

To this end I will prescribe to you four remedies:

I. "*Provide for thy own household..*"
II. "*Gird your loins.*"
III. "*Take a lighted lamp in your hands,*" and
IV. "*Wait for the coming of the Lord.*"

The best preparation for the judgment consists of the proper use of these four remedies. I will explain them to you:

I. After Jacob had served Laban for a considerable time, he said to him one day: "Send me away, that I may return into my country, and to my land. It is reasonable that I should now provide also for my own house" (Gen. xxx. 25-30).

These are beautiful words, and so should every Christian soul often say to itself during the time of this earthly life: "It is reasonable that, before my body dies, I should look into my affairs, not my temporal or bodily affairs, but after my moral and spiritual affairs, of which I shall have to give a strict accounting to the Lord, my God. It is reasonable that I should not only care how I spend my temporal life, but also how I shall fare in the eternal beyond. It is reasonable that I should not feel satisfied with procuring what is necessary for the welfare of others, but that I should take into consideration that some day I should appear before God, the stern Judge, free of all faults and with a clear conscience. What good is this life to me, with its care and trouble, its labor and anxiety for temporal good, if I make no preparation for the future life, which will last through all eternity? A prudent man thinks not only of to-day or to-morrow, but looks into and prepares for the future; and a prudent Christian should likewise be more careful of the eternal than of the temporal. Consequently it is no less just and necessary than reasonable and wholesome, that every one who desires to stand the test before the judgment of God should, once a year, if not oftener, set aside certain days and hours, during which he will lay aside all temporal affairs and think over seriously, in the solitude of his private chamber, how he has husbanded his soul, with the divine gifts and graces, what good he has done or left undone toward obtaining eternal life, or what evil deeds he has committed to deserve eternal death. O, my dear Lord, how often we sin during the course of a year! Of how many useless words, and idle thoughts, not to speak of sins and vices, we find ourselves guilty in 365 days! How many opportunities we miss of

doing good! How many mistakes and faults does not even the just man commit every day! How many hours of precious, irrevocable time we pass in eating, drinking, playing, sleeping, gossiping, and idling! And for all this we shall have to give an account to God!

Who can record them all, these sins, faults, and omissions, these words and thoughts of a whole year, a whole lifetime! And yet, they are all marked down in the book of our conscience, which the Judge will hold before us and the devil as accuser will read to us. And at every period there will be said to us, "Give an account of this!" You have lived so many years, months, weeks, days, and hours, you have received from God so many gifts and graces to merit heaven by their use, "Give an account of this!" Whether you have held a public office or position, or acted as minister, judge, or magistrate, whether you have been a father or mother, master or mistress of a household, an administrator or guardian, a merchant or host, no matter what position it was, which made you not only responsible for yourself but also for others, for their morals and possessions, "Give an account of it!" What you have done for their advantage or to their detriment. "Give an account" for all those souls which were led into evil deeds by your oppressions, which fell into sins and perished through your dilatoriness and negligence. What will he answer who never once thought of this seriously during his whole life? He who is mindful of his own salvation, let him follow this advice and judge himself every year, or rather every evening before retiring, and let him examine his conscience and in that way bring justice into his soul during his lifetime. He will then pass more easily before the divine Judge, the severer he has been with himself. For it is true, what St. Paul says, "If we would judge ourselves, we would never be judged." This is the first remedy to render the coming judgment easy.

II. The others are given to us by the Lord Himself. In St. Luke, Chapter XII., we read, "Let your loins be girded." In those times men and women in the Orient wore a long, wide garment, which at work and upon going on a journey they caught up with a girdle, so as not to be hampered by it. Christ points to this custom, when He wishes to say, that we should occupy ourselves continually with doing good and prepare ourselves for the journey into eternity, that we should be free of all outside influences and free of all possessions gained unjustly, which might hinder us from passing untrammeled on the path of death to our judgment. St. Gregory

gives another interpretation of these words. He says: "We gird our loins, when we restrain the lust of our flesh, by moderation, modesty and retirement." It is certain that many Christians are condemned on account of debauchery and unrighteousness. These two vices are so common nowadays that we might almost call every one who has not to accuse himself of them an angel in the flesh. Indeed, it is painful to one's ears to hear almost daily of trickery and fraud, theft and robbery, fornication and adultery, murder and suicide, which have become of common occurrence. Is it a wonder then when we say that many will perish? If I dared tell all I know many of you would shudder. But you know sufficiently well.

III. The third remedy says, "You shall bear burning lamps in your hands." What does this mean? It means that we bear burning lamps in our hands when we give to our neighbors a *shining* example by our good works, particularly by works of Christian charity. "Blessed are the merciful," says Jesus Christ, "for they shall obtain mercy." This charity is practised by all works of Christian love for our neighbor, it is bestowed upon the poor, the needy, the suffering, the living, and the dead, by alms, assistance and advice, by visiting and waiting upon the sick, by consoling the sorrowful, and providing for the widows and orphans. How many benefits and graces of heavenly glory some people could obtain for themselves if they would bestow upon the education and bringing up of a poor orphan the expenses and tender care which they lavish upon a favorite lap-dog. Who knows what might become of many a poor, neglected child if it could be brought under Christian influence and care? It might grow up to be a credit to its country, for the salvation of souls, to the honor of the Almighty, to the eternal consolation and joy of him who adopted it, while now it is but a prey to the tempter in the public streets, and grows up and lives among sins and vices, until the judgment overtakes it.

It is a work of Christian charity to bear no ill-will toward anybody, to hurt nobody by calumny or evil report, not be over suspicious and hasty in judgment. "Judge not," says the Lord, "and you will not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. The measure which you mete out to others shall be meted out to you." A work of Christian charity is also praying for all the deceased faithful and for the souls in purgatory. A certain priest offered during his whole life all his good works and merits for the benefit of the poor souls. When he was lying on his death-

bed, and the thought came to him that he would soon have to appear before the judgment seat of God, a great anxiety befell him that he had given everything away in life. But behold! An innumerable number of saved souls appeared to him and exclaimed: "Fear not, we shall all go with you to the judgment seat and stand up for you before the Judge!" St. Jerome says with perfect right: "I have never heard of anybody dying a bad death who has practised works of charity during his lifetime."

IV. The fourth remedy is: "You shall be like to men, who work for the Lord." The Lord comes when he hastens to the judgment. But because we do not know the hour in which He will come we should ever hold ourselves in readiness to receive Him and appear before Him in judgment. "Blessed is the man who is always fearful; but he that is hardened in mind shall fall into evil" (Proverbs xxviii. 14). Be fearful to offend the Lord before it be too late. "With him that feareth the Lord it shall go well in the latter end, and in the day of his death he shall be blessed" (Eccl. i. 13).

These are the most efficacious remedies with which you can help yourselves; the way in which you can equip yourselves in life to stand the test before the Lord's judgment. It was my duty to present to you these remedies; it is for you to use them and employ them. If you do not do this, it will not be my fault, for I can testify before the Lord that I have taught you truly. Nobody can be forced to do either right or wrong; everybody is free to choose for himself.

But I can beg you and adjure you to get yourselves in readiness for the judgment. "Make friends," not among men, whom you must leave at the hour of death, but make your friends among the chosen of the Lord, so that they may aid, protect, and defend you in the hour of judgment. Above all make a friend of Mary, the most blessed Mother of the Judge, the refuge of sinners, the mother of charity! Make her your friend by daily veneration and make her your mother by filial love. If she aids you, you will be saved. "If all the devils should be arraigned against me before the judgment-seat of God," says the pious Suarez, "if the whole of hell should rise up against me and open its jaws to devour me; if all the saints should desert me; if thou, O Mary, wouldst only speak one word of intercession I would be saved." This is a great consolation, but only for those who during life make themselves worthy of Mary's aid and protection.

XXXIII. Preparation for the Judgment in Time of Sickness.

"Be prepared to meet thy God."—Amos iv. 12.

SYNOPSIS.—Four things seldom thought of, which nevertheless show the omnipotence of God. Though He has created millions of human beings, yet, 1. No two bear to each a perfect exterior resemblance. 2. No two souls exactly alike in the sight of God. 3. No two die in exactly the same dispositions, or in the same state of responsibility before God. 4. No two receive exactly the same sentence. Hence, the necessity for each one to keep an account of himself, and "set his house in order."

II. How to prepare for the Judgment. 1. Attend to temporal affairs and then put them entirely out of the mind. 2. Set the affairs of the soul in perfect order. 3. Take proper means, as indicated, to repel the last attacks of the devil. Lastly, hold sweet and tranquil converse with God, thinking of His infinite goodness and mercy; making acts of hope and resignation, and frequent aspirations and appeals to our loving Saviour.

There are four things which are eminently calculated to disclose to us the omnipotence of God, but concerning which, at the same time, we pay the least attention. The first is that from among so many millions of human faces there are not to be found two which perfectly resemble each other. For although there is such a strong resemblance amongst some persons that it is difficult to distinguish them, still all features are not so alike but what we can discover some disparity between them. No human art can effectuate that.

The second is that just as no human being perfectly resembles another exteriorly, the hearts and consciences of mankind are also so different that we should be far more likely to find two faces quite the same than to find two perfectly similar dispositions. Confessors know this best. The third is that although many thousands of persons die daily upon earth, still each one dies in a different way, even though in many cases the sickness is the same. The fourth is that every soul also will have a different judgment, a different sentence. For as no single soul resembles another in merits or in sins, so, therefore, not one will be perfectly alike in reward or punishment. "Weight and balance are judgments of the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 11), says Solomon. The just God weighs everything exactly, the good and the bad. His sentence is in accordance with the weight.

Upon these scales of Divine justice our actions, our works, words, and thoughts will one day be laid. O how powerfully with some will the evil preponderate; with others the good! It is in our power now to add weight to the good or the bad, and thus either to increase our merits or add to our sins. Let each one set up a

scale and place on one side all the good that he remembers to have done during his lifetime; on the other side let him place all the sins and offenses with which his conscience accuses him. What sentence would you have to await? Still I will judge no one, still less condemn or damn them, for surely each one has enough to do with himself. Only I again repeat and advise what I said recently, "Arise and prepare thyself!" while you yet live. When sickness befalls thee, which brings the approach of death, know then that the Judge knocks already and calls to judgment. Then you must be judged, and no more time will be given you to "prepare to meet thy God."

How this may be done I will explain to you in the present discourse.

Certainly for persons who have a clear conscience and are in the state of grace it would be a great happiness to die a sudden death, for they are thereby spared that fearful struggle which we call the death agony, in which the dying hover between fear and hope of victory and wrestle with the pains of death, with temptations and the assaults of the devil. Nevertheless it is also a great grace when God lets a man die only after a tedious illness, slowly and in possession of his senses, for he can profit every moment by the sufferings of sickness and the agony of death, and prepare himself for death and judgment.

1. When his time arrives the sick man should be told what the Prophet Isaias foretold King Ezechius: "Give charge concerning thy house, for thou shalt die and not live" (IV. Kings xx. 1). That is to say: Give your last orders, and put in order your temporal affairs. Make a will according to law so that that which you will soon have to leave behind will not be robbed and inherited by those for whom you did not intend it and who will not be thankful to you for it. Do not forget your poor soul, and arrange for it that which will be profitable for it in the other world, and alone can assist it. Have you still what belongs to others, or debts still unpaid, dear friend, arrange everything justly so that no one will suffer injury by your death, or have something to ask of you in the next world, otherwise bad wishes will follow you to the grave, and you will be called upon at the judgment to give a much more severe accounting of that which you owe to God and man. Do not rely upon others in this respect, but do now before you die all those things which you ought to do, for you may rest assured

that no one after your death will fulfil exactly as it ought to be done that which you should have attended to during your lifetime.

2. When you have in this wise attended to everything temporal, make a large cross over the whole world. Let nothing further disturb you, give no further thought to temporal affairs, for if you could win all the treasures and wealth of the world, and obtain all the honors, offices, and dignities, they could not help you, because you must die, and consequently leave all things. Let your heart, therefore, your mind, your care, your trouble be applied to that which is before you, namely: God—death—judgment! Prepare to meet thy God, by a contrite, sincere confession of all the sins of your life, as far as you can remember them. Think: you can still efface them by tears of penance, and do penance for them by bearing patiently the sufferings and pains of sickness. "If we were to judge ourselves," says the Apostle, that is to say, if we were to accuse and punish ourselves, "we should not be judged by God." Death is a long journey, from this world into eternity. "A long journey lies before thee, arise, therefore, and eat." Take as Viaticum the Sacramental Bread of Angels, the forms of which conceal the true flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, thy Lord and Saviour, of which He Himself has said: "Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life and will not die." In this mystery is presented to you the Lord of life and death, thy Judge, the same from whose lips thou wilt hear the sentence directly after death. Now He comes to thee, still "meekly," full of grace and mercy, willing to receive thee graciously, if thou wilt only be reconciled to Him. And as a pledge of His loving, conciliatory disposition He gives thee Himself, with soul and body, flesh and blood, with Divinity and humanity! Canst thou still doubt that He will save thee? That this Most Sacred Food should be profitable and meritorious for thee, you must partake of it in the full possession of thy senses, with a willing heart and free will, but not from compulsion, or at the solicitation of others. If even material food does not have a good effect when we are forced to take it, so is this far more the case with the Bread of Heaven, with the Divine Food of the soul. It is really deplorable that many Christians have almost to be forced to partake of it, and often it can not be given to them until they are nearly unconscious.

3. In order that the last combat which the sick person has to fight with death, the devil and his angels, may lead to victory, in

order that the soul may be encouraged for the struggle, and the powers of the body fortified as much as possible, God orders, through the Apostle James, that "the sick man should bring in the priests of the church, who will pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man: and the Lord shall raise him up (give him courage to bear his sufferings, strength for the death agony, or even restore him to health), and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James v. 14).

What can be more consoling to a sick person than this promise, which God, who is the eternal truth, gives to him? We might almost laugh at those foolish persons who consider this most advantageous Sacrament of Extreme Unction as the mark of "extreme misery," and, therefore, not infrequently prefer to die rather than to receive it. They imagine that when the Priest begins to anoint them that their soul will depart. And yet there are many hundreds still living, and they are well and healthy, who have already received this Sacrament, and probably just on that account regained their health! Hence I wish to exhort all not to postpone the reception of the same, as soon as the sickness appears dangerous, much less to resist when it is about to be given; for God did not institute it for death, but for the salvation of souls and the well-being of the body.

These are the three chief points in the preparation for the judgment of which we should faithfully make use in the time of sickness. If there is still some time to spare, every good Christian should use it in confidential intercourse with God and His Saints; he should beg his guardian angel for assistance and help at the agony of death and at the judgment. For this many words or long prayers are not necessary. Most effective are the quiet sighs of the heart, those little prayers of flame, through which heart and mind are kindled and lifted up to God. For instance: "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, and I shall not be confounded in eternity," or, "If thou shouldst kill me, O God, still would I hope in thee," or "When shall I go and appear before the face of God?" or "Jesus, I love thee, Jesus, for thee I die," etc., or with Christ upon the cross, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."

With these and similar aspirations of the heart we should employ the last moments, and either utter these short prayers ourselves or have them said by others. In this way we may prevent that fre-

quent complaint from the sick-bed, "We can neither pray nor do good." You can do enough good. Even if you can not pray, you can at least think of God. If you can not pray, you can give an alms, so that others may pray for you; not, however, for the prolongation of your life, but for patience in your sufferings and for a happy death. When you can not pray you can offer up your sufferings to God as a punishment for your sins; you can love God, unite your will to His, which is indeed the most excellent work and best pleasing to God; you can at all times say, if not with the lips, then with the heart, "Thy will, O Lord, be done!" Lord, because Thou willest, as Thou willest, and what Thou willest; it is all the same to me; to suffer, live or die, when and how Thou willest.

It must indeed be pleasing to God when He beholds that a sick person is so perfectly resigned to the Divine Will, as willing to suffer and die as to live and be well again. This resignation to the will of God is besides our duty, for as every one ought to give their life as a confession of faith, so are they also obliged as a mark of obedience to give their life into the hands of God whenever He wills it. We lose nothing thereby, for as St. Paul says, "Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."

He who prepares himself thus for death is also ready to meet his Judge, and may hope to find a favorable judgment. And because this is the best thing that I can wish myself and you, I have delivered these two sermons on the twofold preparation for the judgment, the one to be made during the enjoyment of good health, the other in time of a dangerous sickness. God grant in His mercy that I may not have admonished in vain!

XXXIV. The Resurrection.

"For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible."—1 Cor. xv. 52.

SYNOPSIS.—At the omnipotent command of Christ, "Arise!" all men shall rise either to eternal life or eternal punishment.

I. Why shall we rise again? Death was the penalty of sin. 1. Christ atoned for sin and gained the victory over death. 2. As He suffered in the flesh, and was glorified in the flesh, so He has given grace to the Saints and Martyrs to suffer in the flesh, that they, too, might be glorified in the flesh.

II. As the flesh that has been mortified after the example of Christ shall be glorified, so that which has rebelled against His law, and despised His example, shall not be glorified, but shall be condemned to eternal ignominy and suffering. Hence, "We shall all indeed rise again; but we shall not all be changed."

Contrast between the just and the reprobate. Exhortation to follow the example of Our Lord and His Saints in order to merit "the resurrection of eternal life."

"Arise!" said Christ to the paralytic. "Arise," will one day resound throughout the whole universe. This same word, which restored the sick to health, will call all the dead from the graves, before the Lord shall come again to judge the living and the dead! Rejoice, ye devout, for you will rise from death to everlasting life, to be recompensed, to glory, to heaven! Tremble, ye ungodly! You will rise from death to death everlasting, to punishment, to torment, to hell! Faith teaches us this, and it is your duty to comprehend this important truth rightly. I will do my part, and with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, explain to you to-day:

I. Why we shall rise again.
II. In what way we shall rise again.

I. "As in Adam all die," writes the Apostle Paul, "so also in Christ all shall be made alive" (I. Cor. xv. 22). Which means: As all died through sin, so will all, by the grace and omnipotence of God, be raised to life again, because Christ, by His dying, has destroyed sin, and death, which it produced. Hence it is an undoubted doctrine that our body, which, after our death will decompose in the tomb, will rise again incorruptible, "so that," as St. Paul again says, "every one shall receive according as he has done good or evil in the body." Because as God will raise us to life so that every one shall receive in his own body the recompense merited, it follows that we shall rise again with soul and body. It is peculiar to the Divine justice to reward or to punish that which has been used either for good or evil. Now as the soul, through the flesh, with the flesh, in the flesh has done either good or evil, the flesh was the companion and the instrument of all its actions; the flesh has either desired against the spirit, or through penance and mortification, been subjected to the spirit. Therefore it is right that, like the soul, so also should the body receive reward or punishment, partake of everlasting glory or eternal torment, and to this end be awakened and rise again.

What sufferings did the bodies of the martyrs endure! "Some were racked, not accepting deliverance, that they might find a better resurrection, and others had trial of mockeries and stripes, moreover also of bands and prisons: they were stoned: they were cut asunder: they were tempted: they were put to death by the sword: they were distressed, afflicted" (Heb. xi. 35-37). How much hunger and thirst, cold and heat, poverty and want, blows and stripes, must not the bodies of the holy confessors have endured? With what heroism did the bodies of the holy virgins struggle against the flesh and its desires, against the world and its pomps, against the devil and his temptations, so as not to sully the temple of the Holy Ghost, to preserve the purity of their souls and their innocence unspotted. Therefore it is just that the bodies also should participate in the heavenly reward, and consequently be reunited with their souls, *i. e.,* rise again. "The flesh," says Tertullian, "is the hinge of our salvation, by which the soul remains united with God. The flesh is anointed in order that the soul may receive its consecration. The flesh is overshadowed by the laying on of hands so that the soul may be enlightened by the Holy Ghost. The flesh is nourished with the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, so that the soul may, so to speak, become Divine. The flesh is washed in Baptism that the soul may be cleansed and sanctified." Thus soul and body are intimately united from infancy to old age, operate together at work, combat, and strife, therefore they can not be separated from one another in the recompensation.

Certainly, to our perception, which beholds the body in the grave falling into dust and ashes, it is very hard to believe that this body will one day live again. "The sun sets and rises again, the day enshrouds itself in the night and comes forth again. The trees, shrubs, and flowers die off in the autumn, and begin to bloom again in spring, as if they rose again. Days, months, years hasten away, and return again anew; we ourselves even arise daily from death, as often as we awake from sleep. For what is sleep? only an image of death; and what is the awakening? an image of the return to life or of the resurrection."

Now as God has placed so many prototypes of the resurrection before our eyes, we can the more easily believe that "all will be awakened at the sound of the trumpet, and rise again incorruptible." Great God! what a spectacle that will be! The sound of the trumpet will penetrate into the graves, the earth will quake, and from the

four ends of the earth will resound the cry, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment!" and in a moment there will stand there millions and millions of human beings, from out all the centuries, parts of the world, and nations, those who died upon a sick bed, or remained upon the battlefield, were drowned in the water, secretly murdered, or eaten by wild beasts!

Yes, all will rise again, but with what a difference!

II. "We shall all, indeed, rise again," says the Apostle Paul, "but we shall not all be changed" (I. Cor. xv. 51). All shall indeed rise again, rich and poor, good and bad, but all will not come forth from the graves in the same manner. All shall indeed rise again, but all will not be clothed with a glorified body. For every one at the resurrection will receive the reward merited, good or bad, in the body which they bore during their life. Therefore even the wicked will rise again in a perfect human body without defect and infirmity of nature, incorruptible and immortal, but their bodies will be assailed by the sufferings of eternal chastisement. The bodies of the just on the other hand will, in the state of glory, appear like unto the glorified body of Jesus Christ. They will never more be subjected to the sufferings and inconveniences of this life, but they will be incapable of suffering. By virtue of their agility they will be set free from the weight which now presses down all bodies, so that the soul can transport them wherever they wish, easily and quickly. By virtue of their subtility they will ever be subject to the soul, and always ready to execute its intentions. Thereby the blessedness enjoyed by the soul will spread a radiance over the whole body, so that the bodies of the Saints will shine like that of Christ upon Thabor. Some of the bodies of the elect will shine like the sun; others like the moon; others like the stars, and just as among the stars some are more brilliant than others, so also the glorified bodies will surpass one another in beauty. "There is one glory of the sun," says St. Paul, "another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars. For star differeth from star in glory: So also is the resurrection of the dead" (I. Cor. xv. 41). If we gaze at the firmament by daylight we see no stars shining, because their shimmer is obscured by the sun, but with the night the stars come forth and the whole heavens appear then in stellar glory. And there are living, too, in these days, I doubt not, many devout souls in the world, many poor and God-fearing widows, many forsaken laborers and workers, though contented with the dispensa-

tions of God, many married couples who distinguish themselves by their meekness, chastity, and mutual love, many youths and maidens, the glory of whose virtues is hidden, and is not seen by human eyes; we look upon them as other ordinary Christians, often not giving them a glance, especially when poverty is their portion. But when the day of this mortal life is ended, and "that night cometh, when no man can work" (John ix. 4), then they will come forward enveloped in a brightness never suspected! O how many beautiful stars will rise then in the Valley of Josaphat. How many unknown and despised will, on that day, shine in their glorified bodies like the sun, like the moon, like the stars of the firmament! O how beautiful then will shine the body of a Saint Alexis, which for seventeen years lay under the staircase unknown in his own father's house! How radiantly then will the body of a St. Agnes shine, which love, and the inspiration to preserve its virginal innocence, urged to a martyr's death. In what spendor will then appear the body of St. Isidore, a peasant, and others with him, who in the most extreme poverty and want exhibited a heroic patience and bore their cross daily with rejoicing for the glory of God. Therefore, ye widows and orphans, who so seldom find assistance, and who sigh under the pressure of injustice, ye forsaken poor, who find no compassion in mankind, continue to bear steadfastly with Christian patience and for the love of God the difficulties of your poverty-stricken lives! For on the day of the general resurrection you will come forth from your graves with greater glory and shine more radiantly than those whom you have served, or for whom you worked.

What a consoling truth, dear brethren! We shall rise again! What consolation in sickness and infirmities, in all afflictions and troubles, in the loss of our fortune, in the death of those belonging to us, is the thought: "We shall rise again, we shall see one another again in a glorified body, we shall find everything again a thousandfold. Therefore though our bodies should be pressed like the grape, or ground like corn in the mill, or fall to dust and ashes, although heat and cold, hunger and thirst, want and poverty, suffering and sickness, torture and death have to be endured, no matter what may happen—one day it will be whole again. "For the king of the world will raise us up, who die for his laws, in the resurrection of eternal life" (II. Macc. vii. 9).

XXXV. The Last Judgment.

"I will gather together all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Josaphat: and there hold judgment with them."—Joel iii.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—How a certain King was once frightened by a painting of the Last Judgment. No painting, no description in human language can adequately portray its horrors.

I. What the Last Judgment is. The Last Judgment is general—passed before all mankind, and will be immediately followed by final sentence upon soul and body reunited.

II. Why this Last Judgment? 1. To judge the body as well as the soul. 2. To make the final awards. 3. To justify God before all men. 4. To vindicate His Incarnate Son.

III. The terrors of the Last Judgment. 1. The revelation of the secrets of hearts. 2. The manifestation of all the attributes of God. 3. The labors and sufferings of Our Lord, for the redemption of all mankind.

IV. The place of the Judgment; the appearance of the Judge; and the pronouncing of the sentence.

Exhortation: Repent, amend, fear sin, and beseech Our Lord to be merciful when He comes to Judgment.

Bogaris, King of Bulgaria, liked all terrific and awe-inspiring sensations. He enjoyed to be in dismal places, and he took a particular pleasure in hunting the most savage animals. The wall papers, pictures, and sculpturing of his palace represented most frightful objects. Now when he heard that a monk in his vicinity named Jerome was an excellent painter, he paid him a visit and begged him to paint a picture to suit his taste, that is to say, the most frightful that he could imagine. Father Jerome granted his request and painted for him the last judgment. The Divine Judge appeared seated upon a cloud surrounded by His angels, in a majestic and wrathful form, which produced an exalted and warning impression. On the right were to be seen the just, radiant with glory, but on the left sinners, pale, depressed, anxious, and fearful, in expectation of the last sentence of the Judge. Below the devils were depicted in hideous and frightful forms. They appeared raging and threatening, and were supplied with instruments of torture of all kinds. Below these again there appeared an abyss, from out of which burst forth a volume of horrible flames. The pagan king at the first glance was delighted with this picture, and declared that he had never seen anything so beautiful and awful. However, as he did not know what the picture represented, he took the monk home with him, so that he might explain it. Father Jerome explained it all with such expression and

earnestness that the prince was more frightened at the explanation than at the picture, became a Christian, and led a life so penetrated with the thought of God's judgment that whenever he was about to undertake anything, or when affairs were discussed in council it was his custom to say: "Let us remember that that which we are now going to do, will be scrutinized at the Divine judgment."

Would that I had this picture at hand to show you, that it might arouse in you a salutary fear that would influence your whole mode of living! Yet you have only to open the eyes of your faith and you will see that which I am unable to represent to your bodily eyes. The last judgment is indeed an awful picture. I will prove this to you now by explaining:

I. What the last judgment is.
II. Why there is a last judgment, and
III. How terrifying the last judgment will be.

I. In the first place to speak of the last judgment, theologians say that this judgment is none other than the final valid decision to recompense a man according to his deserts; this decision, however, must emanate from a person who, with the right, has also the authority, the necessary knowledge, and the will to execute the sentence.

This doctrine in regard to the general or last judgment consequently is to be understood in no other way than as the final valid decision of the knowledge and will of God to recompense all men according to their deserts, so that those who have done good will receive reward, but those who have done evil will receive punishment. It is called: 1. The general judgment, because this decision will be passed upon all mankind, good and bad, Christians and heathens, believers and unbelievers, living and dead, by a Judge whose authority no one can withstand, so that every one will receive his reward or punishment before the eyes of the whole world. It is called: 2. The last judgment, because upon this declared decision no other will follow, there will be no other to hope or fear for, but the decree pronounced will remain unalterable for all eternity.

The sentence will be executed immediately, and it is beyond man's power to postpone or to alter it.

II. Now perhaps some will think: Why will God hold this general judgment, as every one will have already received his sen-

tence at the particular judgment? which, as we have heard, is irrevocable, and will remain the same at the general judgment.

1. God will and must hold a general judgment that man should be judged. The whole man, with body and soul, has done good or evil; therefore, he should receive his reward or punishment in body and soul. Now in the particular judgment only the soul was judged, and while it was perhaps suffering in the flames, the body suffered nothing and was committed to the earth with great ceremony. Now as both did either good or evil, so should they both be judged, and this will take place after the resurrection of the body at the general judgment.

2. God will and must also hold a general judgment, so that all may be rewarded properly. Upon this earth ungodly men are often honored, the worst villains are frequently considered righteous men; and, on the contrary, the just and the truly devout are censured, derided, and persecuted; virtue is hated, vice crowned with roses: Christ Himself esteemed by the few, Belial and the devil worshiped by the many. But finally justice must be done. God can not permit this culpable disorder to exist forever. And therefore He has ordained a general judgment, in which the sheep will be separated from the goats, the mask torn from the vicious who are wolves in sheep's clothing; revealing sinners in their cunning and dissimulation, but also showing the innocent and the virtuous triumphant. "O how many so-called virgins," says St. Jerome, "will then be covered with shame, and see themselves placed in the ranks of prostitutes!" On the other hand, many who were calumniated we shall behold arrayed in the spotless clothing of the lamb. Then all will be revealed that has taken place in the darkness of the night, in obscure corners, deeds of which no one was a witness!

3. God must hold a general judgment for the sake of all men, so as to be able to judge all their works. For at death men leave children, disciples, or friends, who imitate their example and obey their directions. As one is responsible for the consequences of voluntary scandal until the end of the world, so he can indisputably still occasion sin a long time after death, and therefore continue to deserve fresh punishment. This may happen by wrong and unjust bequests; by strife over unpaid debts; through books and writings, which often long after the death of the author bring the poison of temptation to thousands of souls; through pictures and paintings which cause scandal afterward. These kind of works carry

on their operations often for centuries, when their first cause is long decayed in the tomb. For this reason only at the last judgment, when the operations of their scandal are at an end, and the measure of their offense is full, will the degree of their punishment become fixed. The same applies to good actions. They, too, are often the seed sown in the furrows of time which grow continually and bear fruit, which can only be gathered in and rewarded at the end of the day.

4. God must hold a general judgment for the sake of the Incarnate Son. Misunderstood by the Jews, crucified by the heathens, slandered by heretics, insulted by the impious, dishonored by Christians, He must receive a solemn, glorious satisfaction. His power, glory, and greatness, His Divine attributes must one day be declared before the whole world. All the creatures of heaven, of the earth, and under the earth, who will there be assembled together, must fall down upon their knees and adore Him as the Messias, as their true God and Lord! He will be transfigured there before the whole world—the valley of Josaphat will be His Thabor, the last judgment will be His feast of the Transfiguration! It will be the last work of the Lord, and therefore also the most perfect, and at the same time the most awful.

III. As the artist employs all his creative power when about to produce his masterpiece, so also will God the Lord, when He puts the last touch to His work, and thereby concludes the whole of creation, make use of His Infinite creative power. He will call to His aid His wisdom and knowledge, by which He Himself beholds the secrets of hearts. By this He will be possessed of the knowledge of all the disputes that have ever taken place, of all the complaints and accusations, of all murmurings and objections, of all the doctrines and errors of all the laws and rights of the whole world. He will then publicly explain how wise and prudent all His arrangements were, how justly calculated for our welfare were those of which we silently disapproved. He will call to His aid His kindness and mercy toward the devout, His strict justice toward the sinner, His invincible power and strength to reward the good for evermore and to punish the wicked everlastingly. He will call to His assistance all the powers of heaven, all the angels and archangels, to separate the ungodly from the devout, to exalt the latter into heaven and to cast the former into the abyss of hell. Even the instruments of His Passion, the cross, on which He died, the lance with which

His side was opened, the nails which pierced Him, the reeds, scourges, chains, cords, and thorns which entwined His head will serve as objects, the sight of which will torture the ungodly, but reassure the just. His five sacred wounds will be just so many bloody witnesses that during the three and thirty years of His life He never ceased to work for the salvation of each particular person. Through these He will dash all sinners on the ground, and as St. Augustine writes, will say also: "Behold the Man whom ye crucified; behold the wounds which you inflicted and by your vices made bloody again. Behold the side that you pierced; it was opened for your sake and you did not wish to enter therein. Behold, you ingrates, how devotedly I have loved you, and how you have hated and persecuted me!" Briefly, He will call to His aid His entire Divinity and Humanity, His Infinite power and omnipotence to accomplish His work most gloriously!

This judgment, we are told, will be in the valley of Josaphat, whence there is a view of Mount Calvary, upon which Christ died on the cross for the salvation of the whole world. A rainbow, that former sign of peace and of grace, we may presume, will appear over the place of judgment. Upon this wonderful throne will be seated the omnipotent God in human form; His countenance will shine like the sun; His raiment, as upon Mount Thabor, will be as white as snow; His feet will resemble glowing brass; His sacred wounds will gleam like shimmering stars, and with a glance that will animate the devout and strike the ungodly like lightning, He will survey the millions of angels, devils, and men, who await the sentence from His lips. And this sentence? We will speak about it next time. For to-day I say only this: Sinners, amend while there is yet time, before you will be judged! Innocent and just, fear to sin because you will be judged! But I prostrate myself at the feet of Jesus, the coming Judge, and cry with a contrite heart, "When Thou comest to judgment, O Jesus, condemn me not!"

XXXVI. The Final Sentence.

"Come! Depart!"—Matt. xxv.

SYNOPSIS.—Only two sentences to be heard on the last day—one "Come," the other "Depart." These sentences are eternal and irrevocable. How terrible the thought of this eternity for those who shall be condemned! This sentence shall not be changed; for 1. *It is an extremely just one;* 2. *There shall then be no mediator;* 3. *There shall be no time for contrition;* 4. *There will be no appeal to a higher court;* 5. *The Judge is unchangeable;* 6. *It will be executed immediately. What the action of the condemned would be if they were given one more chance. The thought of this sentence should deter us from offending God.*

"Come! Depart!" These are the words with which that tremendous spectacle in the valley of Josaphat will end. "Come! Depart!"—with which everything that God has said, taught, proclaimed, all the actions of mankind will be finished. "Come! Depart!" These are the words upon which depend salvation or perdition, heaven or hell. "Come! Depart!" "Come, ye blessed of My Father, into heaven!" "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!" This is the final sentence which will be uttered, and either the one or the other of which will infallibly befall every man. Either one or the other will be for us also. May we all hear that blessed word "Come!" We shall thereby be born eternally, eternal life will be assured us. But woe unto those whose portion will be the second sentence! Woe to them if they must hear, "Depart!" This word also will be uttered for an eternity. It will never be altered. O just God! If only it were not eternal! Ah! If there was only a hope that the sentence here pronounced would be changed again, if such a ray of hope shone even in immeasurable distance, yet would every sinner have the consolation: "There will one day be a time when God will have mercy upon me and rescind His sentence.' But no; all hope is in vain, such thoughts are to no purpose. Never will the sentence be altered.

Never! There is therefore no possibility of this sentence being changed, for there could be no circumstance which could move Christ to this. This sentence is: 1. A supremely just sentence, the Judge Himself having the most precise knowledge of the actions of each man. He probed their most secret plans, the most hidden projects, the most intimate thoughts. He knows him from the first moment that he drew his first breath, saw everything beforehand that he would do in time. For this reason it is impossible that the Judge should pronounce an unjust sentence for want of intimate knowledge.

Neither can He be deceived by false witnesses, for He has neither need of a witness nor an accuser, for He Himself knows best what man has done. Briefly, His omniscience and His justice do not permit Him to add the least injustice either from criminal suspicion or from precipitation, or from passion or from partiality to a person. 2. This sentence will nevermore be changed, for there will be no Mediator to beg for grace. It has already often happened, and still happens daily, that God rescinds His sentence of punishment at the prayer of a Godfearing man. God threatened once to destroy the Israelites, by the army of their enemy, on account of their idolatry, but Moses lifted his hands up to heaven until the people were forgiven; the victory over the enemy even was granted them. Thus also did David by his fervent prayer move God to replace the sword of vengeance in the scabbard. Ezechias heard that he was to die, thereupon he besought God so fervently that his allotted span of life was lengthened for fifteen years. But, at the final sentence on the Day of Judgment no cry for grace, for forbearance, for mercy will be made. Even Mary, full of grace, the angels of God, and guardians of men will have nothing more to do with grace, with the protection of their adopted children, but they will confirm the sentence passed by the Judge on the day of wrath. 3. This sentence will nevermore be changed, for there even contrition, which now can wipe out all sins, will have no more power. Therefore the wise Solomon says: "When the wicked man is dead, there shall be no hope any more" (Prov. xi. 7). The time of this life only is the time of grace. The Lord has limited His mercy to this life. As soon as this is over, grace also has an end, and rewarding or punishing justice alone remains. O how different it is now! If God passes sentence upon the sinner while he is living it is always conditional. If you are converted, if you will be converted and amend, the sentence can be changed through penance. There is, however, no question of such a sentence at the last Judgment; it is not a conditional, but an unconditional sentence. "Depart from me, ye cursed!" it says. Consequently any contrition is fruitless, and there is no more time for amendment. 4. This sentence can nevermore be changed, for there is no higher court to which we can appeal. The court of justice which will be assembled in the valley of Josaphat is the highest. The Judge who there passes sentence is the Supreme Lord of heaven and earth. In Him is united all the power of jurisdiction; from Him flows all administration. There is no authority over Him, but

everything is subjected to His sway. Certainly He is also man, but He is at the same time God, to whom the Father has conceded the right to judge the living and the dead. For "the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son" (John v. 22). If therefore a soul is once sentenced to eternal death it has no longer any recourse to a higher authority by whom the sentence could be altered. 5. No; it will nevermore be changed, for the Judge Himself is unchangeable. "I am the Lord!" He says, "and change not." I am He "with whom there is no change, nor shadow of vicissitude" (James i. 17). What He has once uttered by virtue of His wisdom and justice that will remain unalterable throughout eternity. For as His knowledge is incapable of improvement, so there will never arise any such motive by which He might decide to alter His sentence in anything.

For this reason the execution of the sentence will not be delayed a moment. As soon as it is uttered it will be executed in that same instant. The "blessed" surround the King of Glory, and on every side accompanied by the jubilant Saints, they hasten rejoicing toward the heavenly Jerusalem. Higher and higher they ascend, until they lose themselves exulting in the clouds. Then, however, will the "cursed" first know their loss. Parents, children, friends, brothers and sisters, behold themselves parted, alas, forever! Then the tooth of remorse begins to gnaw the heart; envy, hatred, anger feed upon them, and their whole body is convulsed by unspeakable agony. And whilst they behold the army of the blessed taken up into the clouds, the universe will yawn under their feet, and hell opening its jaws, they will be driven like snowflakes before the hurricane, and plunged in the wildest disorder into the fiery sea of torments, without consolation, without hope of grace or of redemption! "The wrath of the Lord on the day of vengeance will spare none."

O dearly beloved! If there was still time for these unhappy souls to beg mercy of God, what would they not try! "Ah, Lord!" they would say, "although by our sins we have deserved to be excluded from the communion of Saints, and to be deprived of the Beatific Vision, O grant unto us the grace to lie under Thy sacred feet for evermore." But no. "Depart! and never let Me see you again." "But, O Lord," they would say again, "before we part, O remember that we are Thy creatures, for whom Thou didst shed the last drop of Thy blood." But no. "Depart from me, ye cursed!" "But, O Lord, if Thou dost condemn us to depart

laden with Thy curse, grant us a spot upon earth as our place of punishment!" No! "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!" "Lord! Lord!" they would still cry, "put a limit to our punishment; say a hundred, a thousand, a million years! no matter; but grant a time when our punishment shall cease." No; not even that! "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels."

Thus would their souls cry out in their death agony, if there were still time thereto. But there will be no more time; the sentence will be passed and executed immediately. "And these shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just into life everlasting" (Matt. xxv. 46).

Then the judgment in the valley of Josaphat is at an end, and with it everything that has existed in the world. The history of the world is closed; the changing destiny of each individual person is closed, and there begins everlasting life and eternal death, both of which will have no end. Let us now conclude the consideration of these truths, that every Catholic Christian must know and believe if he would be saved, these truths namely: "That Jesus Christ will be the judge of the living and the dead, that He will eternally reward the good and eternally punish the wicked."

I have preached a great deal about this truth, my dear brethren, but certainly not too much. There can be no greater incentive for a Christian to do good, no more powerful curb against the instigations to evil than the remembrance of the earnest truth, that we shall one day be judged publicly of all our words, works and thoughts by God, judged so precisely and rigorously that He will not even spare the just. Should you be indifferent to much which I have spoken of, at least pay attention to the two words mentioned to-day: "Come! Depart!" "Come, ye blessed! Depart, ye cursed! Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world! Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." Certainly every one wishes for himself the "Come." But ever sinning again, and always more grievously; always offending God; always going to confession and not amending, and yet wishing that God might still be a merciful Judge; that is asking that God should act against all justice, and, if not rewarding evil, still not punish it. But this can never be in eternity. "For God is just, and just is His judgment."

Therefore, rather suffer all through life than voluntarily commit one mortal sin! Let this be our holy resolution. Then instead of "Depart, ye cursed," we shall hear "Come, ye blessed," and we shall rejoice, and our joy no one shall take from us!

XXXVII. The Apostles' Creed—Its Origin and Meaning.

"In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one."—Eph. vi. 16.

SYNOPSIS.—Many are the enemies against whom we have to contend. But St. Paul teaches that "faith" is a strong defense against all. The Apostles' Creed offers us the points of faith.

I. The origin of this creed. Christ commissioned His Apostles to preach all He had told them. Hence in order that all should be instructed in all that was necessary for eternal life, in order to have unity in the doctrines as taught by the different instructors, it was necessary to have a determined formula. So the Apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, drew up the creed known as the Apostles' Creed.

II. St. Augustine's love of the creed. He likened it to 1. A mirror in which we see ourselves; 2. To a shield with which we protect ourselves.

III. Very profitable to study the creed. Hence parents should instruct their children from an early age.

Numerous, indeed, are the enemies of our salvation. We can hardly take a step, or breathe a word, or move a hand without coming in contact with them. They surround us in all shapes and forms, visible and invisible. The world in which we live, the devil who launches unceasingly the darts of temptation into the human heart, and, unfortunately, we ourselves conceal in the innermost chambers our domestic enemy, the concupiscence of the flesh. And who has not already been assailed by these darts? Could you count the thousands whose souls have been destroyed by that enemy? St. Paul, therefore, admonishes us in his Epistle to the Ephesians: "In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one." Faith, then, is the sure shield against those powerful enemies. For this reason I have spoken on faith all this year. I have explained to you everything that this faith embraces; have shown you what you must believe about God; of God in three Persons, of God the Creator, of God the Redeemer, of God the future Judge of all mankind. What does it avail, however, to know all this if you do not live in con-

formity with your faith? "What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works?" (James ii. 14). Then faith would be a shield that you could not use. No; your works must accord with your faith, your professions, with all that which you have just heard. Now, how this should take place I will now begin to explain to you. But how? Shall I for this end repeat every single point? Not at all. For everything that I have explained in detail in the previous instructions is contained in just as brief, simple, and comprehensible a manner in the Apostles' Creed. Hence, it is sufficient if I explain this to you. But not so much according to the words and the sense, but rather in what way you should live according to your faith.

Now, before we treat of the apostolical symbol we ought to know whence it takes its origin, and what the term "the apostolical symbol" means. I shall speak to-day, therefore:

I. Of its exalted origin.
II. Of its beautiful significance.

I. For us and for our salvation, Jesus Christ Our Lord and God came from heaven to earth. Now, having lived upon earth as God and man until His thirty-fourth year, having preached the new law and the true faith, confirmed the same by many signs and miracles, having finally suffered and died, having been buried and having risen again, He commanded His Disciples to take this doctrine which they had received from Him into the whole world, and to proclaim it to all nations: "Go ye therefore into all parts of the world," He said, "and preach the Gospel."

To fulfil this commission of their Lord, the Apostles labored day and night, and how strenuously each of them strove to execute the command may be seen from the words of St. Mark: "But they going forth preached everywhere." For St. Jerome testifies that at the same time they elected the Apostle Matthias in the place of the apostate Judas; they divided the countries between them; so that the holy doctrine of Christ, His Gospel, the belief in Him should be proclaimed in all parts of the world. "The spirit of the Lord assembled them, and made known to each one where he should betake himself—the one to India, the other to Spain, another to Greece. Now, however, Christ had during the three years that He taught upon earth communicated to His Apostles so many mysteries, given

them so many exhortations, spoken to them so much of the kingdom of God, that the Evangelist St. John writes: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did; which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written" (John xxi). Now, how should they communicate all these things to the unbelieving, savage nations? How were they to explain and announce all this, that even the most ignorant, ordinary man could learn it and obtain the knowledge of everything necessary to his salvation? And how should they beware of the danger of deviating from one another in many points, and of proclaiming false doctrines to the people? So as to prevent this, the Disciples met before their departure, and took counsel as to the manner in which they should preach the faith and the Gospel of Christ to the world, so that all nations might comprehend it, and they themselves be so united in spirit and faith that their teaching in all places should be one. For nothing could be more contrary to the spirit of Christ, nothing more injurious to the salvation of souls, nothing be more of an obstacle to the spreading of the Gospel than that St. Peter should preach one doctrine in Rome, St. Andrew another in Achaja, St. John still another in Asia. The Holy Ghost therefore assembled these twelve men before their apostolic journey, and enlightened by Him they composed together the creed containing a summary of the whole Christian doctrine in twelve articles, which they were to announce to all men. In this manner, according to tradition, the Christian profession of faith was composed by the Apostles before departing for their missions. For this reason, therefore, it is called also the Apostles' symbol or apostolical composition. It is that profession of faith to which all the Bishops, all the Fathers, all the Councils of the Church have held. It is that profession of faith which embraces the whole Catholic belief, which is announced and said even to this day in all parts of the earth. It is that profession of faith, "so brief in words, but so great in Sacraments, in mysteries. That which was prefigured in the Patriarchs, announced in the Scriptures, that which was prophesied by the prophets, whether of the Father, or of the Holy Ghost, or of the death of the Lord and the mysteries of His Resurrection; all that is briefly contained in this symbol, so that we may comprehend and profess it."

II. St. Augustine liked to speak of this creed, and he spoke thereof so powerfully, so impressively, and with such unction, that it is easy

to understand how greatly he was permeated with its beautiful significance. It appears to him: 1. As a mirror, in which we behold ourselves, and 2. As a shield which we should use against our enemies. Most lovingly he says to his faithful: "O learn this symbol each one of you who professes the Apostles' Creed, and when you have learnt it write it upon your hearts, and say it daily when alone, especially at night before you sleep, and in the early morning when you rise, so that you may never forget it. Do not say: 'I said it yesterday, I said it to-day.' Say it always and remember it well. Renew your faith and look to yourself! Your creed shall serve you henceforth as a mirror. You shall behold yourself therein, as to whether you believe with your heart everything which you profess with your lips, and whether your works agree with your faith." O Christians, how profitable, how wholesome it would be to sit before this mirror for a quarter of an hour daily. In the mirror of faith you behold the interior of your heart. It is not sufficient to have this faith printed in books, or to drawl it out like a song; it should be, as St. Jerome says, as deeply engraved upon the heart as life itself. For in reality a life depends upon faith, the life everlasting, for without faith no one will be admitted to eternal life.

Parents, therefore, should be assiduous in impressing upon their children while they are yet of tender age, and for that very reason more susceptible to religious influences, that basis of the faith, the Apostles' Creed, in order, so to speak, that the faith may grow up with them, and be strengthened and fortified in them with the years. Still not only for the children, but for the parents themselves and for all adults it is profitable to say the Apostles' Creed often with devotion. In violent temptations or doubts in faith, against God and His mysteries, there is no better weapon than the creed. For the power of the infernal seducer is broken by the profession of the true faith. Hence St. Paul tells us to "take the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one." This shield was grasped by the Saints in temptations, and they were always victorious in the combat. Therefore, dear brethren, when you are tempted by the evil spirit to doubt this or that article of faith do not waste words but say at once: "I believe, I believe everything that the faith represents to me. I believe, I believe." And this will be sufficient to overcome the devil. So much of the origin and signification of the Apostles' Creed or the twelve articles of faith. This at the same time will serve as an introduction to the

future sermons in which I shall, God willing, explain one article after another to you, and say: 1. What we have to believe, and 2. How we should live accordingly. For our faith should not be a dead one, but a living one, one that combines with the faith works corresponding to it. This faith gives then that eternal life which is the last article of the creed we profess and which we hope to obtain.

XXXVIII. The First Article of the Creed.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth."

SYNOPSIS.—I. This first article of the Creed contains an abundance of truths. By it we profess that (a) there is a God; (b) Three in Person, One in Nature; (c) that He is almighty. It is not enough to confess this, we must believe it with our whole heart.

II. Therefore, 1. We should not live as the heathen who knows not God; 2. Since God is our Father we should give ourselves over to His loving dispensations, cheerfully accepting in resignation and obedience all that comes from Him; 3. Since He is almighty we should trust in Him, go to Him in all necessities.

III. Conclusion—We should be ever grateful to God for all His gifts, and always use them in the proper way.

Even the Pharisees, that hypocritical race, said to Jesus: "Master, we know that thou art truthful, and teachest the way of God according to the truth." He is the foundation of our faith. He alone it is through whom we believe in our hearts what we profess with our lips. In His most holy name, therefore, I begin to explain to you the twelve chief points of this faith, praying that I may be enlightened by Him who filled with His grace and inspired the Disciples to compose this creed.

According to the first article of this creed therefore:

I. What have we to believe?
II. What have we to do?

I. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." As often as we repeat these words in prayer we utter an abundance of the greatest truths.

"I believe," we say; that means: I profess and affirm, that everything that is contained in these twelve articles is the eternal, infal-

lible, and incontestable truth, for which I, as a Christian, am obliged to answer for with life and property. Firstly: "I believe in God," we say. With these words we profess that we believe firmly that there is a God. "I believe in God," we say, not "I believe in the gods," so as to show that we confess and adore only one God, and to distinguish ourselves from the pagans and unbelievers who, having lost the knowledge of the one God, are sunk in idolatry and worship animals, plants and stones, as gods.

Secondly, When we say: "I believe in God the Father" we confess at the same time the distinction of Persons and the oneness of the Godhead. For the first Person of the Godhead is the Father, who according to His Person is distinct from the Son and the Holy Ghost, but yet with them constitutes only one God, therefore is not earlier, not older, not greater, not more in the Godhead than the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Thirdly, We confess of this Divine Father that He is "almighty;" that means, so mighty that He can do all things, that He has all power, all strength and might to operate, to create and to make what and how He will, without having need of any assistance.

And of this Almighty Father we confess that He is the "Creator of heaven and earth." That is to say, of all visible and invisible creatures which are in heaven or out of heaven, upon earth or under the earth, which are of body or soul, which have been or will be. We confess that in the beginning He made the world and the heavens out of nothing, by His word alone, which no man, no angel, could do, which God alone can do.

We confess all this in the words of the first article: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." Still it is not enough for us to believe and confess that there is one God, who alone is God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. The spirits in hell believe this and they tremble on that account. Nor is it enough that we believe His words and works, and hold this for an undoubted truth of faith. For this is known no less by the damned and is experienced by them as well as by the blessed. But for true faith it is expected that we also agree to all this with our hearts, that we embrace all this faithfully with our hearts, and consequently direct our heart and mind to God, place all our confidence, our love and hope in Him, adore Him as our Lord and God, fear and love Him as our Father, never despair of His goodness and mercy. For it is written: "Not every one who says: Lord, Lord" will be

saved, but only those may hope to enter the kingdom of heaven who live according to the will of the Father, who by their works show forth and attest His faith.

Now, dear brethren, listen and learn how you should live according to the first article, so that your faith may not be fruitless and lifeless, but living, i. e., profitable and conducive for eternal life.

II. Firstly, then, when we believe according to our confession that there is a God we must not live like heathens, who either observe no law, because they do not know of the existence of a God, or live so godlessly, being blinded by the evil spirit whom they worship in their gods and who incites them to impurity, murder, and criminal actions, so that under the appearance of devotion they practise the most abominable vices.

What must we think of those Christians who live so godlessly that they neither keep the Divine law nor the commandments of the Church? You who lie, do you believe that there is a God who "will destroy all that speak a lie" (Ps. v. 7)? You who deceive do you believe that there is a God who "curses him that acts deceitfully" (Matt. i. 14)? Do you believe, you who are addicted to impurity, that there is a God "who shall judge fornicators and adulterers" (Heb. xiii. 4)? Do you believe, you who sin by stealing, that there is a God who says that "confusion and repentance is upon a thief" (Ecclus. v. 17)? Behold, this means to act in one manner and believe in another: to say I believe in a God and to act as if there were no God.

Secondly, if you believe, as you profess, dear Christian, "that God is thy Father, that He hath possessed thee and made thee of all mankind, you must be subject to Him like a devout child. You must obey Him from your heart, and endeavor to do His will in all things. You must undertake nothing that could offend Him, do nothing that might call forth His holy anger. You must relinquish to His paternal dispensations, to His solicitude, your life and all that is yours, you must abandon yourself as completely as a blind man to his leader, as the child lets itself be led by the loving mother's hand. This is to show in reality that you believe in "God the Father." "Dost thou then not remember," says the Holy Ghost, "that God is thy Father, that He hath possessed thee and made thee and created thee? That He preserves thee, feeds, watches over and cares for thee?" Now, if you think and believe this, where then

is the honor, the love, the obedience, the resignation, the childlike confidence to your Father? Ah, your works are different from your words, they do not agree with your faith.

Thirdly, if you believe as you profess, that God is almighty, you would always gladly submit your understanding and will to His words. You would leave no room for unbelief, allow no doubt to take root in your heart in regard to what He has said and promised. You would never ponder over His mysteries, never make over-curious inquiries as to how this or that could or could not happen, why and for what reason this so happened, will or might happen, how this is possible and can be true, and so forth. But it would be sufficient for you to know that He is truthful in His words, wonderful in His works, that He is almighty, and that for this reason nothing that He has ever said or promised can be impossible. And for this very reason you must know that everything comes from God, sin only excepted. You should thank Him for the good that He shows you, and praise Him also for that which appears to you to be a misfortune. For He can, as the Apostle says, "even out of temptation, i. e., out of evil, prepare an advantage for you." You must never doubt when want oppresses you, never despair when you no longer know how to help yourself. For the hand of the Lord is not shortened, His almighty arm has never been weakened. Abandon yourself therefore to the Lord, and you will experience that God can always help, when even man is of no further assistance. The reason that want always oppresses you is because your hope, your confidence is far from being as strong as it ought to be, if your belief and profession really is, as you say: "I believe in God the Father Almighty."

In conclusion, if you believe, as you profess to do, that God is the Creator of all things in heaven and upon earth, you ought also to believe and know, that from Him alone you have to beg and to expect all graces, everything necessary for your salvation in time and eternity. You should believe and know that He has created all creatures not without a purpose, but each one has a destined end and aim, namely, in the case of man, to serve God, his Creator, love and honor Him, and thus be blessed some day; in the case of other creatures, to serve man so that through them he may attain to the end and aim appointed for him. Hence you are not at liberty to use God's creatures according to your will and opinion, but according to the will of God for His honor and your salvation. If you do otherwise you

violate God's property, antagonize all creatures, because you deprive them of their end and aim and oppose yourself to the will of God. As heaven and earth and everything therein are the works of the omnipotent Creator, so must you know that He preserves and rules them as He does you, and that none of them would serve you if He had not decreed and permitted it.

This is all deduced from the first article. We declare all this when we say: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." We must observe all this that our works may agree with our faith. Then shall we one day enjoy the fruit of the true faith, namely, everlasting life in heaven.

XXXIX. The Second Article of the Creed.

"And in Jesus Christ his only Son, Our Lord."

SYNOPSIS.—I. In this article we confess Christ (a) as God, (b) as the only Son of God, (c) as Our Saviour, (d) as Our Lord. He is Our Lord because 1. He purchased us with His precious blood; 2. He was sent by the Father to unite heaven and earth; 3. He is God and Creator; 4. He is Head of the Church.

II. The name of Jesus (a) a name of power and sweetness; (b) to be used with reverence; (c) we should try to be worthy of it.

III. We are brothers of Christ—we should try to imitate His virtues.

IV. Christ is Our Lord and Master. We owe service to Him, not to men.

I. When in the first article of the creed we say: "I believe in God the Father," we confess thereby the existence of only one God, the oneness of the Godhead. But we confess also at the same time the distinction of the Persons who are in the Deity when we say: "I believe in God the Father." We explain this distinction of persons more explicitly when in the second article we say: "And in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord." According to this we declare, firstly, that we believe Christ to be the natural Son of the Eternal Heavenly Father and the second Person of the Godhead in the same pre-eminent manner as St. John gives testimony of Him when he says: "We confess that Jesus is the Son of God" (I. John iv. 15); therefore that Father and Son are one God in substance and distinct only in Person.

Secondly, we confess of this second Person that He is the only Son of the Heavenly Father. We indicate thereby that God has no other

natural Son, who is begotten of the Father from eternity, equal to Him in substance and in nature. For although the Heavenly Father as Creator of all mankind is at the same time also the Father of all, yet we can not be called the natural sons or children of God, but only adopted sons, because He has graciously adopted us as His children. For St. Paul also writes to the Romans: "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)." We have thereby become children of God, heirs of heaven and co-heirs with Christ; but Christ is the only begotten, the only natural Son of the Heavenly Father, and He has no equal.

Thirdly, we confess that this natural only Son of God is called Jesus Christ. With this name we testify that He is also our Redeemer and Saviour. For this He was called by the Angel Jesus before He was born of Mary, "because He was to save His people from their sins." We call Him also Christ, i. e., the anointed of the Lord, to express thereby that the Son of God is at the same time man and God, consequently the true Messias, whom God sent into the world for the redemption of His people, whom He anointed as High Priest according to the order of Melchisedech, and who offered Himself as the bloody sacrifice of expiation for the whole world.

Fourthly, we confess of the only Son of God that He is our Lord when we say: "And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord." We express thereby that Christ has power and authority to control our whole being, that He is Lord over all we possess, over life and death. This right was acquired by Christ: 1. Through the redemption. Christ became our Lord by buying us with the infinite ransom of His own most precious blood from the bondage of the devil.

2. He is also our Lord because He has received from His Heavenly Father the most absolute power to rule over all mankind and the choirs of angels, over heaven, earth and hell. Christ Himself told us this when He said: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18).

3. He is our Lord because according to the Godhead He is one with the Father, therefore He is also our Creator and Author, who has the right to control and command His creatures as He wills.

4. He is in particular our Lord because we are Catholic Christians, and He is the Head of the Catholic Church. We are united with Him as members to the body which is led by the head. This is all contained in the words of the second article, and this we believe and confess when we say: "And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord."

But we have much to learn herefrom in order that our life may be conformable to our faith.

II. This article mentions the holy name of Jesus. We confess: "I believe in Jesus." Jesus signifies Saviour, Redeemer. This is the most holy name that can be thought of or uttered in heaven and upon earth. It is so holy that we men can not even say it unless, as the Apostle says, God grants us the grace to do so. And it also cost the Son of God exceedingly to acquire this name. "He humbled himself," writes St. Paul, "becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. Wherefore, God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. ii. 8, 9). Mark well, dear Christian, how precious this name is, how glorious, how awful! When this name is invoked in grievous temptations, in great dangers and necessities, the devils fear and all hell trembles, and the angels of heaven hasten to assist. And the Heavenly Father has promised to grant every petition offered to Him in this name. With what respect, with what devotion should that name be uttered at which all creatures should reverently bow! How sinfully do those persons behave who at every little worriment use the name of God, unmindful of the second commandment wherein God expressly commands: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." There is no more salutary name, indeed, upon God's earth than the name of Jesus, when it is used in a right and befitting manner. For our salvation depends upon this name, and we can only be saved in it and through it. But at the same time there is no name so injurious and so harmful, none through which we can sin more grievously than the name of Jesus, when it is misused by cursing and disgraceful utterances. St. Augustine says: "He who would profit by the name of Jesus must keep away from sin when he desires to call upon the name of the Lord." We are all Christians, and we are called Christians after our Lord. But what does this name avail us if we do not lead a Christian life and imitate the example of Christ, but rather act against Christ, i. e., in an unchristian manner? In this way the name does us more harm than it profits us. We bear this name unworthily, to the greatest dishonor of Him after whom we are called. "Alas! we act and live so that just because we are called Christians we offer Christ the greatest affront."

Furthermore, we confess that Christ is the only begotten Son of the

Heavenly Father, and that this Heavenly Father is also our Father; consequently, that we are brothers of Jesus Christ. If we are brothers of Christ, then we have hope of the inheritance of the Father; but if we wish to have an equal share with Christ we must be assiduous in showing an equal love toward God, equal obedience, equal patience, equal purity, in a word, an equally holy course of life, otherwise we have no claim to the kingdom of heaven.

Lastly, we confess that Christ is our lawful, absolute Lord, to whom we are subject in all things, who can condemn us to eternal perdition in soul and in body. No one except God has such authority upon earth. For although the rulers of this world punish their subjects, or may even kill them, yet the soul is not subject to their authority. Hence Christ says: "Fear not those that kill the body, and can not kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. x. 28). O how unreasonably you behave when you esteem a man more than God, when you would rather offend God than displease a man! It is true you do not perceive this now, for money is being pressed into your hand. You are invited to well-spread tables. All this dazzles you. But it is a human recompense. You will hold on to it until this earthly existence ceases. Then another kingdom will open before you where only one Lord rules and distributes everlasting punishment or eternal recompense. Do not forget this, dear Christian, so that you may so serve men as not to lose the reward of the Eternal Lord.

XL. The Third Article of the Creed.

"Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

SYNOPSIS.—The mystery of the Incarnation can not be comprehended by the finite mind. Therefore great faith required.

I. The meaning of the words of this article. Heretical doctrines regarding this mystery refuted 1. By the very words of this article; 2. By the words of the angel to St. Joseph; 3. By the words of St. John. . .

II. What we must believe and profess regarding this mystery. (a) The Divinity of Christ. (b) The humanity of Christ. (c) The virginity of Mary. (d) The cooperation of Holy Ghost.

III. Practical consequences. 1. The great love of God. 2. The duty of following the example left by Christ. 3. The powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, since she is the Mother of Christ.

Of all the mysteries of our Holy Catholic faith there is none which has caused more dissension, more error, schism and heresy than the one contained in the third article of the Apostolic Creed. The cause of it I wish to explain to you to-day. Indeed, we can not be surprised at it when we ponder over the fact that the conception and birth of Christ are as far above the works of mankind as they are beyond all human understanding, so that they require a strong, living and firm faith by virtue of which man believes what he can neither see nor comprehend.

Therefore, I ask you when you now listen to the explanation of this third article of the creed to have recourse to your faith and expect of me no other proof than what the words of the article itself offer. Understand then:

I. The proper sense of words.
II. What according to these words we must believe.
III. How our way of life should correspond with this faith.

I. When we make our profession of faith with the words: "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Begotten Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," we give testimony to our belief in the only begotten Son of God, but in none other than the One who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. We declare our belief in Him as God and man. God from all eternity and man in time. We also testify that we believe in that Christ who alone was conceived by

the Holy Ghost without the aid of man, and whose conception did in no way destroy the virginity of Mary. For though she was a mother, because she had given Him birth, yet she remained a virgin before, during and after His birth, because she had conceived Him by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost without the cooperation of man. This is the sense of the words of this third article: "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

II. According to these words we, as Catholics, must believe and profess: 1. That Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was at the same time true God and true man; that in accordance with His nature and being He was the Second Person of the Godhead from all eternity, that in time He assumed human nature and united it inseparably with His Godhead. Although He now had two natures, the divine and the human, yet He remained the same person, namely, the Second Person of the Godhead. 2. We must believe and profess that Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Godhead, was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, like any other child in the womb of its mother, but not in the same common, human, natural manner, but by the supernatural, the overshadowing power of the Holy Ghost. For thus spoke the Angel Gabriel to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the holy child which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." This was confirmed by the angel of the Lord, when he appeared before St. Joseph and bore testimony to the virginal purity of Mary: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." The teaching of heretics that Christ was born through the cooperation of St. Joseph is therefore false. The teachings of those who held that Christ had brought His mortal body with Him from heaven is equally erroneous, as is the teaching of others who said that Christ had only an apparent body not a real one formed from the flesh and blood of Mary, for this is contrary to the distinct expression of St. John: "And the word was made flesh."

But how was it possible for Christ to take flesh through the overshadowing and cooperation of the Holy Ghost, who is Himself fleshless and a pure spirit? This no human being can comprehend. For this reason I told you that in this article we must be

guided much more by faith than by human insight and understanding. Nevertheless, we can make this question clearer to ourselves by a comparison. We all know that our soil will not bring forth fruit unless it has previously been cultivated, plowed and sown, and yet it is certain that at the creation of the world the first sheaf grew out of the soil solely by the wish of God, man having had no part in its existence and growth. So, too, did Mary bring forth the blessed fruit of her womb without cooperation of man. It was the Holy Ghost alone who, by His almighty power, formed a body from the pure flesh and blood of the Virgin, with which at the same moment the Second Person of the Godhead united Himself. And thus was Jesus who was God from eternity conceived as man and became flesh in the womb of Mary.

III. Out of all this arise important precepts which we must follow if our life and conduct are to reflect the profession of our faith. For behold! How immeasurably great God's love was toward man that He permitted His only Son to descend from Heaven and become man, solely for our sake and our salvation. Think of it! As far as impotent, mortal, sinful man stands beneath God so far has God humbled Himself for the sake of man; the Master for the sake of His servant; the Creator for the sake of the creature; the Judge for the sake of the poor sinner; God for the sake of man! Is there any human love which can be compared with this? You love your friend, your husband, your wife, your relatives, as you say, from the bottom of your heart; but why? Because they wish you well, they love you, they serve you, and because you have evidences of their good will. What does this mean? It means that you merely love yourself and seek but your own comfort and advantage. But what could God expect from man? He was God from eternity. Before man breathed He was all blessedness, had everything by Himself and through Himself, as the origin of everything good. Therefore by His love He did not seek His own but your salvation and bliss. Oh, Christian, if you would only believe this, or rather ponder over it thoroughly; if you would think seriously of what your faith teaches you how could you be so ungrateful as to prove yourself an enemy to this infinitely loving God?

Secondly, you can learn from this that Christ became man and walked upon this earth in weak and mortal flesh, to show us by His example how we, the faithful children of God, His disciples and

heirs of His kingdom, should live and act. He was meek, mild and patient, poor and obedient unto His dying day. Oh, how pride, vengeance, avarice, envy, and wickedness despoil a Christian! And how many Christians are there who do not commit one or the other of these sins!

We learn finally that because Christ was born of Mary the Virgin she is really His mother, and consequently can obtain from God all that ever any mother could obtain from her son. If, then, you implicitly believe this, O Christian, take refuge with Mary in all your necessities. Honor her as the mother of the Most High; invoke her as the most powerful of women who exercises a motherly right over the God-man, her Son. Pray to her, the clement, the mild, the benignant, that she may obtain for you the grace of living here true to your faith, and of beholding hereafter the blessed fruit of her womb, Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Saviour.

XLI. The Fourth Article of the Creed.

"Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried."

SYNOPSIS.—Story of the wrathful Knight.—We confess in the Fourth Article, 1, that Christ lived on earth as God and man; 2, that He truly suffered as man; 3, that He was crucified; and 4, that He really died and was buried in the tomb.—Lessons from this article: 1. The Passion and death of Christ will not save us without our own effort. 2. We must carry our cross patiently. 3. Our sins caused the suffering and death of Christ.—Conclusion: Hate sin.

A valiant knight was once grievously insulted, and in his anger he swore to be revenged. Very early one morning he set out to punish his enemy with the sword. Now there was a chapel by the wayside, into which he entered, and glanced at the pictures upon the walls. There were three pictures. The first represented our Lord in His garments of mockery, and beneath was inscribed: "He reviled not, though he was reviled." The second one depicted the scourging with the words: "He threatened not, although he suffered." The third finally was the crucifixion, with these words beneath: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The sight of these three pictures of the Passion touched

the knight's heart. He knelt down and prayed, and his desire for vengeance melted away before the rays of the heavenly love of Jesus like ice before the sun's rays. What powerful pictures, my dear brethren! Oh, may they speak to your hearts as powerfully, as forcefully! For I am about to hold them up to you to-day in explaining to you the fourth article: "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried."

And what do these words say? They say that Christ Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, the King of Kings, our God, our Lord, our Judge, in order to pay the ransom for us, His slaves, His enemies, for us sinners, and to withdraw us from death and the wrath of God, suffered, was crucified, died and was buried. Would one man do this for another? A father for his child, a child for its parents, one brother for another, a servant for his master, a king for his subjects, a judge for the accused, a friend for his friend? I ask, indeed, would a man do for God what God has done for mankind? O love, O infinite, O boundless love!

Ponder it then well as often as you say: "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried."

I. By these words, firstly, we again confess that Christ lived upon earth as God and man. He was to render satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. He was to die for us. For as God He was incapable of suffering, and neither subjected to suffering nor to death. For this reason He had to become man, that He might suffer and die. He suffered this death in the thirty-third year of His life at the time when Tiberius was emperor of the Roman kingdom and Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea. For it was Pontius Pilate who, partly from fear of displeasing the emperor, partly from a shameful desire to please the angry populace and to ingratiate himself with them, condemned the Saviour of the world to the death of the cross, contrary to all right and law, even, indeed, against his personal conviction.

Secondly, we confess that Christ truly suffered as man, and even suffered more than an ordinary man could suffer, suffered for all conditions and nationalities, for heathen and Jew, high and low, priest, layman, soldier and people, for men and women; suffered in body and soul, in His honor and good name; suffered in all parts of His body, from the sole of His foot to the crown of His head.

Thirdly, we confess that He was crucified, therefore that He suffered the at that time most ignominious, most shameful, most

agonizing mode of death. For the punishment of the cross was only for murderers, highwaymen, rebels and so forth, as we see from the fact that at the same time with Christ two thieves were condemned to be crucified. The more agonizing and shameful this death penalty was, so much the more meritorious and rich in blessing was the redemption of man. Through the tree of the cross the whole guilt of the world was to be wiped out.

Fourthly, we confess that Christ really died, i. e., that the holy soul of our Lord was really separated from the body, as it is at the death of every human being. The divinity, however, which was inseparably united to the humanity of Christ remained also always united to it, and neither forsook the indissoluble body of the Lord as it lay in the grave, nor the soul which after its separation from the body had descended into Limbo.

Fifthly, we confess that Jesus after His death was laid away or buried in the earth. He desired not only to resemble us in birth, life, suffering and death, but even after death. His body was received into a new and beautiful tomb in the rock. He was wrapped in the finest linen, and corruption could not touch Him. "His grave will be glorious." This is what a glance at pictures of our Lord's Passion tell us, the representation of which is embraced in those words: "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried." And yet what does it avail to look upon these pictures if we do not what they command us? Does not a voice speak from out each picture: "Go and do likewise"?

Learn, therefore, now what thou art obliged to do according to the fourth article.

II. 1. Everything that you see in these pictures of the Passion Christ did and suffered for your salvation, for your redemption from death and the pains of hell. But all this will avail you nothing if you do not by a thoroughly Christian life participate in the Lord's Passion. Do not abandon yourselves to the very easy opinion that, since the redemption of Christ is so efficacious, because Christ died for all sinners, therefore all Christians will be saved. This is a great error. Does medicine help the sick man, no matter how beneficial it may be, if he only look at it but does not take it? As little will the Passion and death of our Lord avail for our salvation if we do not exert ourselves faithfully to obtain salvation in our state of life. Mark this well, dear Christians, just this will one day constitute your greatest torment in hell, if you should

be so unhappy as to get there, that Christ suffered for you to preserve you from hell, whilst you of your own malice cast yourself therein.

2. Learn from the example of your cross-bearing Saviour to carry your cross, too, with patience. Undoubtedly, each one of you has already his cross, or at least soon will obtain one, for God is very generous therewith. In particular, He gives many small crosses to parents, sometimes, in fact, cross upon cross. It may, therefore, have happened that you have already fallen often under your cross, and you have looked for a Simon of Cyrene to help you carry it. O then, do not be discouraged and impatiently throw your cross to one side, but for the love of God and for your salvation's sake take the cross upon your shoulders. For there is no other road to heaven than the road of the cross. The Son of God Himself had to enter into His glory by this road. And all the saints whom we venerate solemnly to-day had to reach heaven by this road. You will not find one amongst the many whose assistance we to-day invoke who did not arrive at the gate of heaven with the cross upon his shoulders, and they carried it gladly. For what are all our crosses in comparison to Christ's great cross? O they are not heavy, for Christ carries them with us. Your cross will only be the more heavy, even the very heaviest, when your will is so perverse that you will not obey the will of God.

3. Christ suffered, was crucified and died, because otherwise we must have suffered eternally and died an eternal death. Yes, think well on it, dear Christian, for our sins, says the prophet, He was bruised, and because we sinned and He had taken our sins upon Himself His Heavenly Father punished Him. Our Saviour felt this suffering keenly; it entered into His very soul, so that He was sorrowful even unto death. And yet this did not pain Him as that suffering which is caused Him every moment by all sinners who, as St. Paul writes, crucify anew the Son of God, who suffered and died upon the cross for them, and make Him an object of their bitter scorn. Christ the Lord appeared once to St. Bridget. The wounds of His hands and feet were open, His whole body streamed with blood, over His holy countenance there lay an expression of the deepest suffering. Affrighted, St. Bridget started up and cried out in the fervor of her troubled, loving heart: "Alas, O Lord! who then has so ill-used Thee?" Whereupon the Lord pointed in the direction of a house where there was much riotous living carried on,

and said: "It was there that I was thus wounded." What do you think, dear brethren, how would the Saviour look if He were to point out those houses in which there are more sins committed in a year than there are bricks in the buildings? I have often thought of it when I now and then pass such houses and hear things which should never be uttered by a Christian tongue. O all ye saints! To you I lift up my hands and ask your intercession for those unfortunates amongst mankind who employ their youthful vigor in committing the most shameful of sins, when they should employ it only for their sanctification. O pray for them, that at least one may today be converted to the joy of all the saints.

XLII. The Fifth Article of the Creed.

"He descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead."

SYNOPSIS.—The various places reserved for souls after death. By the words of this article is confessed: 1. That Christ's Soul separated from His Body and descended into Limbo. 2. He brought joy and liberation to the souls there. 3. That Christ on the third day united Soul and Body and rose from the dead. Lessons taught by this article: 1. We ought frequently to descend in spirit to hell. 2. Sin, when grievous, takes the life from the soul. 3. The great miracle of spiritual resurrection wrought by repentance. Exhortation to contrition and a new life.

The Lord tells us very plainly in the gospel that there is a place where all the weeds of pride, anger, avarice, envy, and impurity will be cast. It is in this place, this black and gruesome prison, wherein the souls of the damned will be tortured day and night with the devils by an unquenchable fire. It is called hell. There is yet another place where likewise a fire burns for the torment of souls; but this fire purifies at the same time, and has one day an end. This is purgatory, or that place where the souls of the just suffer who depart this life with some stains upon them, and must first be perfectly purified therefrom before they can be admitted to the heavenly country. Besides these two places which still exist, there was in the kingdom of the dead yet another, called Limbo. The souls of the just who died before Christ's ascension went, when on leaving this world they were not quite free from all stain, to be purified in

purgatory, and thence to Limbo. Even those quite undefiled had to go there, for heaven was closed since Adam's sin and had not yet been opened.

I wish to premise this that you might the more easily understand the fifth article of our faith, which says:

I. He descended into hell.
II. The third day He rose again from the dead.

I. 1. (*a*) With these words we make known our belief that Jesus Christ being dead and His body laid in the tomb, His holy soul, with which as well as with His body the Godhead remained always united, descended into the kingdom of the dead, to release the souls of the just who lived before His coming.

(*b*) With these words we confess that there was a place where the just were imprisoned, to whom Christ brought the joyful tidings of their redemption and that of the whole world. They did not, indeed, suffer any pain, but enjoyed a tranquil repose; still they were deprived of the supreme happiness, the immediate vision of God. Hope in the redemption which was surely coming through the Messias was their consolation and support. Jesus announced to them that this redemption was accomplished when He descended amongst them. And as a proof He showed them His splendor as He had it from the Father, and filled them with that rapture which the Beatific Vision grants to souls. Then was fulfilled what Jesus had promised the thief: "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." For the presence of the Redeemer made Limbo a Paradise full of blessedness, full of jubilee, and unutterable joy. O how they must have rejoiced—the patriarchs, the prophets, the high priests and kings and holy souls: Adam, Abel, the first martyrs; Noe, the just; Job, Melchisedech; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, those three ancestors of the just David, the royal psalmist; Ezechiel, Jeremias, Isaias, John the Baptist, Zacharias, and Elizabeth, Joachim and Anne, the parents of the mother of God, and Joseph, the foster father of Jesus Christ!

In view of all those who were in Limbo Christ on the third day reunited His soul and body and rose from the grave. For so the second part of the fifth article of the creed says: "The third day He rose again from the dead."

2. We thereby confess that Jesus Christ on the third day after His death rose from out the grave with body and soul of His

own power. This doctrine is a fundamental doctrine of our faith, a doctrine which distinguishes us from all non-Christians, who steadfastly deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so as not to be obliged to acknowledge Him as God, who awoke Himself from death. For it is against the order of nature, and no man is able of his own power to pass from death to life. God alone can do this. Now, as it is an undeniable fact that Christ rose again, it is also undeniable that Christ is God. "He was dead, and became living again." We confess all this when we say: "He descended into hell, the third day He rose again from the dead." But what should we do according to this profession?

II. "Christ descended into hell." St. Bernard remarks beautifully of this: "Let us now in life descend often into hell, that we may not be obliged to do so after death." He wished to say: We, who as Catholic Christians believe in the existence of a hell and a purgatory, ought frequently to descend in thought into this place of torments, this fiery mine, which is under our feet. There in spirit we should gaze into the fiery flames and reflect how souls on account of a sin either have to suffer eternally or for many years, that we, instructed by the misfortunes of others, now while there is still time strive by penance and good works, to escape this place of torments. O if we only had such an admonition frequently there would certainly not be so many sinners! But the suffering souls can not come to us, and they have no messengers to lay their misery before us and to give us a warning. For this reason then we must go down to them in spirit and thought, in order to learn there how to avoid sin and do good. For, as St. Chrysostom says: "That one will not be cast into hell who whilst out of hell descends in thought into hell." "Christ rose again from the dead." Thereby He not only made certain our future bodily resurrection, so that the apostle St. Paul writes "And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive" (I. Cor. xv. 22), but he has also given us in His resurrection a model and a motive of our spiritual resurrection.

Many, my dear brethren, die even before the death of the body. They die the death of the soul by committing grievous sin. Alas! Who could count them all, the spiritually dead who die away through the vice of pride, avarice, impurity, envy, debauchery, anger, sloth, enmity, deceit, lying and so on, and in the grave of sin, bound and wrapped up in bad habits and impenitence, are beginning to rot and decay?

O may they rise again as Christ arose! May their hearts therefore be affected by a wholesome fear of God's chastisements, and by a true contrition and repentance. May they break through and loosen the seal which the world sets on their hearts, i. e., the disorderly attachment to earth and its joys and possessions; may they roll back the heavy burden from their hearts by a sincere confession in the Holy Sacrament of penance; may they drive away the evil spirits who watch over dead souls, by the absolution which they receive; may they disentangle themselves from the bondage of their sinful habits, their passions, and bad inclinations, and cast them from them, and come forth and hurry away from the grave of the soul, i. e., from the place, from the danger, from the occasion of sin. Behold, this is called a spiritual resurrection, according to the model of Christ. Sinner, wilt thou not arise? Dost thou desire to remain lying in the grave of thy shameful, filthy vices? Know then that as long as thou carriest a mortal sin in thy heart thou art in God's sight carrion, that emits such a stench that all the guardian angels flee from thee; but the infernal vultures approach thee and consume thee. For "where the carrion is there are the eagles assembled." Lazarus had been buried for four days; he had begun to decay, and yet the Saviour raised him from the dead. It was a great miracle, and every one was astonished and went to look at Lazarus. But see, you can do a greater miracle if by contrition and penance you rouse yourself from the grave of sin, and revivify yourself through the grace of holy confession. This should and ought to take place to-day. You have only to say to yourself, as Christ did to the dead Lazarus: "Lazarus, come forth!" that is to say, Soul, come forth out of the grave of sin! How many Lazaruses might return to life? Are there not such in our community? Year in, year out, they lie in the grave of the filthiest sins. They spread abroad in the community a fetid odor, and they infect all those in their vicinity. Even the spiritual guide can endure them no longer. The hideousness of such a soul, which could be so radiantly beautiful, breaks his heart, and he weeps as Christ did at the sight of the dead Lazarus. The priest often cries out in the anguish of his soul: "Lazarus, come forth! Sinful soul arise! Come forth from the grave! Step hither amongst the hosts of the living." But they move not! O miserable souls, when will you arise from death? May it be soon, very soon.

XLIII. The Sixth and Seventh Articles of the Creed.

"He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead."

SYNOPSIS.—Sixth Article of Creed. Vision of Ezechiel. Description of Christ's ascent into heaven. He ascended not only as God but also as man. Reasons for this: 1. That His humanity might share the joy as well as the suffering. 2. To prove that His kingdom was not of this world. 3. To open the doors of heaven. 4. To show us that we could gain heaven as a reward for good done. 5. To intercede continually with God for us.—Seventh article. Explanation of words. Practical application.

In a state of ecstasy the Prophet Ezechiel once had a wonderful apparition. It seemed to him as if he beheld a large cloud and a burning fire therein of liquid shining brass, and in the midst was the figure of four beings, the figure of a lion, and the figure of a lamb, the figure of a man and the figure of an eagle. What might this vision signify? According to the opinion of the interpreters of Holy Writ God showed the prophet in this vision the attributes of the future Messias together with all the mysteries of His life. For the fire symbolized the divinity of Christ, for which reason God is called "a consuming fire." The fourfold figure, however, symbolized the humanity of Christ, together with all the mysteries which occurred in His life, at and after His death. At His birth, namely, Christ appeared as man, and became in all things like unto men. In His Passion and death He resembled a lamb, which, according to the Old Law, was sacrificed for the sins of men. In His resurrection Christ resembled a lion, for He was the invincible lion of the tribe of Juda who triumphed over death, hell and satan. In His ascension finally Christ was like unto an eagle, who of His own strength rose up from the earth and soared up to the sun, i. e., to the inaccessible light of His Heavenly Father's glory. For thus says the sixth article of the creed: "He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

I shall to-day explain what these words mean, so that you may know what you should ponder in your hearts when you say with your lips that Christ ascended. But as the seventh article according to its contents is intimately connected with the sixth, by teaching us that Christ will one day leave His seat at the right hand of God and return again "to judge the living and the dead," I shall

treat therefore in the second part of to-day's instruction of the seventh article. God grant that all the words I shall speak may avail for your salvation.

I. Christ had lived upon earth for thirty-three years, had taught, suffered and died at last upon the cross. The grave, however, did not retain Him. He rose again alive out of the rocky sepulcher. He remained for forty days upon earth amongst His disciples after His resurrection to instruct and show them how to govern His Church, to proclaim His doctrine and belief in Him, with what authority and power they were to bind and loose, what was to be bound or loosed in heaven. Finally He raised himself up from the earth with body and soul, i. e., with His whole human nature, of His own power, and ascended into heaven. "He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty." He was not, therefore, only for a brief period transported into the third heaven like St. Paul, or taken up to Paradise in a fiery chariot as Elias, or carried through the air by an angel as the Prophet Habacuc was; but of His own power Christ ascended above the heavens to the throne of God there to rule with God the Father and the Holy Ghost as God and man at the same time, as He once lived upon earth. But He ascended with body and soul. 1. So that the humanity which served as an instrument to the Divinity to accomplish the work of redemption, might also participate in the divine glory and obtain for the services rendered with the same willingness an equal reward, an equal honor and joy. 2. He ascended to prove by that fact what He had so often said, namely, that His kingdom was not of this earth, that it was not earthly, perishable, but an eternal, spiritual one in heaven. 3. He ascended to open the doors of heaven to us all, which had been tightly closed for four thousand years, for until the moment of the Lord's ascension no one, not even the most devout and holy could enter into heaven. 4. He ascended in His humanity to show us that now also heaven stood open to us, that admission for us was possible and certain, if we faithfully obeyed His teaching and example. 5. He ascended that we might have in His humanity a faithful, powerful, perpetual intercessor with God, an intercessor who would never cease to petition God for us, that He, mindful of our human weakness, would spare us, and not at once after every sin deal with us according to His justice. 6. He ascended also in order that we should not think that heaven was created only for God and His angels, and not for

mankind. Hence we should be consoled in reflecting that Christ ascended into heaven not only as God but as man also, and that there, too, the humanity sits at the right hand of the heavenly Father. This is not to be understood, however, as if God the Father had a body or hands, and Christ sat at the right hand or at the side of the Father; but we only desire to express thereby that, as we honor a man by placing him on our right hand, so, too, the Father honors the God-man Christ, transfers to Him all power, so that in His humanity He is surrounded with the greatest splendor, and rules over heaven and earth.

We confess all this when we say "He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

But now, dear brethren, it is well to observe what happened at this ascension of the Lord's, and in the Acts of the Apostles this article of faith is written down with greater clearness, and is there still more strongly confirmed. After Christ had held a long discourse before His apostles upon the fortieth day after His resurrection, had given them directions which were to serve as their rule of conduct during His absence, and finally had given them the command to prepare themselves for the reception of the Holy Ghost, He led them unto the Mount of Olives. "And when he had said these things, while they looked on, he was raised up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And whilst they were beholding him going up to heaven, behold, two men stood by them in white garments, who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up into heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, so shall he come as you have seen him going into heaven" (Acts i. 9). No doubt can exist but that these two men clad in white garments were angels. What they wished to signify by the coming again of Christ, Holy Church explains to us in the seventh article of the creed: "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead."

II. According to these words we believe and confess that Jesus Christ, as for our sake He came from heaven the first time as God to take upon Himself our humanity and after the redemption was accomplished ascended with body and soul into heaven, so the second time He will come again from heaven upon earth as God and man at the same time, to judge the living and the dead, i. e., all mankind, all nations, all sexes, the just as well as the unjust, the saints in heaven or the living, as the damned in hell or the dead. "This

Jesus," as the angel said to the apostles, this Jesus, as Judge, will come again from heaven, not an angel nor a saint, but "this One," who is at the same time God and man, who was God from all eternity and only became man for love of us. "This Jesus," who has done so much for our salvation, suffered so much; this Jesus who offered up His life, His soul, all His blood for us, and died upon the cross; this Jesus who received all power from the Father, and in whose hand is placed the life and death of every creature; this same One will come hence to judge us. He will come again as an unerring, implacable, strict Judge, to pronounce over each one the sentence that he has deserved according to his thoughts, words and works.

Dear Christian, do you believe this in your heart when you confess it with your lips? Do you believe this, O Christian, who leads a life as if there were neither a heaven for which you should labor nor a God in heaven who could punish you at any moment, as if it mattered not to you whether you went to heaven or were damned eternally? You who as long as your neighbor does not know of your secret pilferings, your frauds, of your other hidden sins, then you do not trouble about them. But you do not think that besides man there is still One other who knows all things, sees all things, hears all things, who will reveal all your shameful actions before the whole world and punish you without favor and mercy. O Christians, how weak our faith is! How little do our works harmonize with our words!

My dear brethren, when you say the sixth and seventh articles of the creed, lift up your hearts to Mount Olivet, and from thence to heaven Think in crosses and sufferings that these alone form the road upon which Christ entered into heaven. Ponder how vain, how empty, how miserable the whole earth is in comparison to heaven, and to the blessedness which there awaits us. Reflect how brief are all the sufferings of this earth compared to everlasting joys, and how surely heaven will be yours if you only follow Christ. But if the flesh, corrupt nature, your passions, anger, revenge, envy, avarice, evil desires incite you to wickedness, or others by their bad counsels or examples tempt you, then imagine that you are standing already in the valley of Josaphat, before the eyes of the Judge, and behold His five sacred wounds, those marks of His Passion, those proofs of His love for our souls, which He retained in His body for this reason

that on that awful day He would exhibit them to the terror of the wicked, but for the consolation of the good. Tremble therefore to open these wounds afresh on that now glorious body of Christ, by your sins and vices. Implore Him daily that, when He comes to judgment with those sacred wounds which He has retained for love of you, He will not damn you, but lead you into heaven with His elect, where "He sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

XLIV. The Eighth Article of the Creed.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost."

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Resume of the teaching of the Creed in regard to the Persons of the Blessed Trinity. What we must believe of the Holy Ghost. (a) We confess Him to be God. (b) We confess Him to be a Person distinct from the other persons. (c) We call Him Holy, because He is the source of all holiness. The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit. Conclusion: Frame your lives in accordance with your belief in the Holy Spirit in your souls.

The principal object of the apostolic symbol is the profession of the Most Holy Trinity in a manner which fully accords with its attributes. Therefore, we say in the first article "I believe in God," i. e., I believe in one God, not in several gods. With that we profess the Oneness of the Divine Being. But as the one Divine Being is common to three Persons of whom every one has His particular attributes, we also profess this difference in person by saying in the first article, "I believe in God the Father;" in the second, "And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son;" and finally in the eighth, "I believe in the Holy Ghost."

As regards the qualities of the three Persons we confess in the first article of the Father that He is the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth. The second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh articles treat of the Incarnation, birth, Passion and death, of the Resurrection and Ascension as belonging to the Second Person, the Son of God. Now follows the eighth article, which gives the attributes of the Third Person, which we confess in the words: "I believe in the Holy Ghost." With this the doctrine of the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is concluded, and we have learned what we must believe of the Divine Being and His perfections.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost." These words imply that we believe in the Holy Ghost as much as we do in the Father and the Son, that He is of the same Being, the same power and might and glory and perfection; in short, that though proceeding from the Father and the Son, He is nevertheless with the Father and the Son the one true and eternal God.

When we say "I believe" we do not mean to indicate by that that we do not doubt in the least the divinity of the Holy Ghost, but this "I believe" means "I am confident, I build upon it," i. e., I build my faith, my hope, my trust, my goods, my blood, my all upon God the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, because I believe and profess that all I am and have and may hope for, comes from the Most Holy Trinity.

Further, when we say "I believe in the Holy Ghost" we confess thereby to the properties of the Third Person or the Holy Ghost. For the Third Person of the Godhead is distinguished from the other two Persons by being called the Holy Ghost. He is called holy, not as if Father and Son were not equally holy, nor is He holy in the sense that we call the angels and other God-fearing souls holy. For these are holy only by the grace which God imparted to them by His own will, while the Holy Ghost is holy by virtue of His own nature. But as regards the holiness of God it is an attribute of the Three Persons equally since each Person is God and no One is greater or lesser than the other.

He is called holy because He is the source and element of all holiness. For it is He who makes men holy by His grace which He imparts to them, by His grace in baptism, confirmation and the other sacraments.

He is called holy because all His gifts and fruits are a work of His sanctifying grace. The gifts are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord. The fruits of the Holy Ghost are recounted by St. Paul in his letter to the Galatians: "But the fruit of the spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity." All these virtues come from the Holy Ghost like fruit from a tree, and reveal the state of sanctity of the soul in which they appear, as the fruit proves the quality of the tree which bears it.

As the Holy Ghost breathes spiritual life into the soul of every Christian, without which it could not live, it is therefore called

"Spirit." Without Him it is impossible to do anything meritorious for our eternal life. "For it is the spirit that quickeneth" (John vi. 64).

Oh, if only all people would believe this article of our creed and live accordingly! How the sweet fruit of the Holy Ghost would come forth and renew the face of the earth! But what shall we say of the faithful who, by their actions, drive out the Holy Ghost?

What! drive out the Holy Spirit, the source of all life and grace! It is moral suicide, and as much worse than physical death as the soul is greater than the body, as eternity surpasses time. If Christians were only fully convinced that it is the spirit that giveth life, and what a spirit this is that is present in them, He would be dearer far to them than the air they breathe, than the blood that courses through their veins, and they would shrink from driving Him out of their souls by sin far more than at the thought of opening their arteries to let the fluid of physical life run out.

To drive out the Holy Ghost is to expel a friend, to strike a father, to evict a benefactor from the house he has given us. It is a climax of folly and ingratitude. And we can drive him out only by taking in the devil in his place. Is it that we think we owe more to Satan? Or do we in our foolishness believe that we can get more from him? O the folly of selfishness, which defeats itself! Instead of charity, joy, and peace, the devil gives us hatred and worry, and the torments of remorse; for life he gives us spiritual death; and for the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and of the other pure spirits who are made in His likeness, he gives us through all eternity the dark abode of fear in hell, and the companionship of his tortured dupes whose lot we too must share.

Cling then to the Holy Spirit in your souls. Guard His continued presence with that watchfulness, with that instinct of self-preservation which you use in keeping your life; with the jealousy and solicitude you use in preserving the friendship of one dearer to you than all the world. He desires to dwell in you, but He will not stay when He is not wanted. It is in your power to decide whether He will abide in you or whether the Father of Lies and Sufferings will take His place. But think, think what the difference is, and what it will mean if you drive Him away, perhaps never to return; for, though you can send Him away at will, it is not in your power to bring Him back.

O my brethren! may He always find a welcome in all our hearts.

May He take up His abode in us, and direct our lives by His grace and light, leading on our stumbling steps from point to point until He lifts us one day out of this place of weakness and struggle into the place of refreshment, light, and peace which He has prepared for those who have given Him the hospitality of their souls in this world.

XLV. The Ninth Article of the Creed.

"I believe in one Holy Catholic Church."

SYNOPSIS.—I. What you profess to believe: That the Catholic Church is the true Spouse of Christ—One Holy and Apostolic. That she is the medium through whom we receive the true knowledge of God and all His gifts and graces. II. How must you live in accordance with your profession? 1. United in the bonds of charity, as children of one mother—members of one body under one head. 2. As our Mother is Holy, we must also be holy, profiting by all the means and graces which she procures for us. 3. Because she is apostolic, we must love and venerate her, and be grateful that we are numbered among her children.

At the beginning of the world God Himself spoke to man through His angels, then through the prophets, and finally through Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son. But now He speaks through His Church, in which there is, and will remain unto the end of the world, the Spirit of the Lord, the eternal truth, and the true knowledge.

The creed teaches us this by saying: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." This we believe and believe as much as when we confess that there is a God who has created heaven and earth, that Jesus Christ our Lord is His only begotten Son, and that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead.

So that you may understand this better it will be necessary to explain to you why we say (a) I believe in a Church, (b) a holy, (c) a Catholic or universal church.

(a) The name "church" in this case does not signify a house of God, a temple of stone, brick or wood, but we understand by the word church the congregation of all those who confess the Christian faith. This congregation is not confined to a single place, city, or country; it comprises all people, wherever in the world believers in Christ have lived, now live or will live unto the end of time. And as we, when we say for instance the whole city or the whole country, under-

stand by that all the inhabitants of that city or country, so do we understand by the word church the whole community of all the faithful, i. e., all souls which the Holy Spirit by His grace gathered together in the unity of faith and united as members of one body to Christ, the Head of the Church. Therefore there belong to the Church: 1. All those who believe in Christ and do not want to separate from the Church by their own fault; 2. All who, though they lived before Christ, believed through the guidance of the grace of God in Christ as the future Messiah; 3. All who have already arrived in heaven and behold Christ the Saviour face to face; 4. All who have departed from this life in the true faith and in the grace of God, but who to atone for some faults committed on this earth are still in purgatory, but are assured of final salvation; 5. All who in the possession of the true Christian faith still live upon earth, combating for the attainment of the kingdom of heaven. All these belong to the Church and are called, if already in heaven, members of the "Triumphant Church;" if still on earth, members of the "Militant Church;" and if they are in purgatory, members of the "Suffering Church."

(b) This Church we call holy, not because we ought to think that all are holy who belong to it; there are among them good and bad, and God grant that there may not be more of the latter than of the former! We call it holy:

1. Because all who are received into this Church must be undefiled and pure, and are for this reason purified and sanctified in holy baptism.

2. Because all laws, ceremonies, sacraments and doctrines of the Church are holy and intended for the salvation of man.

3. Because there does not exist outside of this Church any holiness.

4. Because Christ has given to it the Holy Spirit, who governs, teaches and directs it.

5. Because it preserves the genuine Gospel and proclaims the right meaning of Holy Scripture.

6. Because it alone is competent to create saints, and not seldom changes the most godless into the most repentant of men.

7. Because in this Church there is a Communion of Saints, whose souls are God's dominions.

(c) We call our Church universal or Catholic. It is universal because it is spread throughout the whole world; because since the creation of the world there has been no time during which it has

not existed, because it will remain for all times until the end of the world; because among all nations, sexes and classes there are some who believe in its doctrines and honor and love it as a mother; because in its laws, teachings and ceremonies it is everywhere the same, and all its adherents have the same privileges, benefits and means of salvation.

No other church but the Roman Church can say this of itself. Such unity and uniformity can not be found in other churches. Unsteadily they totter among their doctrines and have almost as many different tenets as adherents to their sects. Therefore is the word "Catholic" the victorious sword in the hands of the Church, with which it hurls all heresies to the ground.

You know now, my dear people, what it means when you say: "I believe in a holy Catholic Church." It means, I believe in a Church which is the union of all the faithful in Christ, those who have lived, live now and will live in future, a church which is the true Roman Apostolic Church, i. e., that church which was founded by Christ and the apostles themselves; which up to this hour has been visibly transmitted and spread throughout the whole world; is governed by the successors of St. Peter and the Bishops of Rome, and which will last unto the end of all time.

I will conclude my sermon on this article by impressing upon your hearts and minds some truths which arise from its teachings.

1. Because the grace of the Lord has united us all in one Church like the members of a body under one Head, we should live peaceably and unitedly together and charitably come to each other's aid as the members of one body. The beautiful testimony given in Holy Scripture: "And the multitude of the believers had but one heart and one soul" (Acts iv. 32), should equally befit ourselves. Where there is discord, enmity, and quarreling the vengeance of God will not be wanting so as to remove such obstinate, invidious, malevolent creatures and maintain unity among the members of His own sacred body.

2. Because the Church is holy we have in her a holy mother. And what behooves us more, who call ourselves children of the Church, than to be holy children of a holy mother?

Yes; our course of life must be devout, just, and holy if we want to be good children of the Church. Yet we must neither hate nor persecute those Catholics who are wicked and lead a vicious life, for

they are members of the Church, even if they are dead and spiritless members. We should only be too eager to convert by our life, our good example and admonitions, by prayer and good works these wayward children.

3. Because the Roman Church alone is the true Apostolic Church, and because we have the great happiness of living in her bosom, I beseech every one of you to love, obey, honor, and cherish this mother more, much more, than your own mother in the flesh. Your natural mother has given you nothing more than that through her you have become a child of man, but the Church makes you a child of God. Of your own mother you have received but food and garb for your body, but the Church refreshes you with divine food and nourishment for your immortal soul. Therefore, honor and love your real mother, the Catholic Church, which, when your own father and mother have long been resting in their graves, will not desert you, and will ever strive to make you happy for all eternity. Let the world say what it may: you adhere to the One Church. This should be your guiding star; this the sign which never deceives you; this the bond which draws you to the only true goal. Therefore, confess always with lips and heart: "I believe in a holy, Catholic, Christian Church."

XLVI. On the Communion of Saints.

"I believe in the Communion of Saints."

SYNOPSIS.—There is in the Catholic Church a beautiful institution called the Communion of Saints. The importance of this is seen from a consideration of this doctrine and of the benefits coming to the members of the Church. 1. This institution is a society in which the good deeds and merits of one member may be applied to another. Example of members of our material body. This society is composed of Christ as its head: the Blessed Virgin, the Angels, the holy ones in heaven, and the members of the true Church on earth, whether they are living or dead members. 2. All share the treasure which is stored up in this treasury of the Church, Though we be poor in merits, or prevented from acquiring them on our own part or in sin, yet we can under certain conditions obtain a share in the inexhaustible merits of this treasury because of the Communion of Saints. The great happiness and consolation of this.

There exists in the Catholic Church a most beautiful and rich institution wherein Christ has accumulated an infinite treasure of merits. "For you are bought with a great price" (I. Cor. vi. 20). To this treasure the Blessed Virgin has given a large share. In this

treasure are found also the merits of all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins. Christ has told us to "lay up our treasures in heaven."

When, however, I look upon mankind, I find the poor and needy almost countless. For "All have sinned and are wanting in the glory of God." All have become poverty-stricken and must strike their breasts begging for pardon. "Forgive us our trespasses." Nevertheless the reckoning will be strict, and the debt must be paid "to the last farthing." Now we Catholics have the great consolation that we may draw from the rich treasure of the Catholic Church as much as we require, because being in the Catholic Church that Catholic treasure is ours also. Each one of us partakes in the prayers, good works and the merits of the others. This is expressed in the words: I believe in the communion of saints. Truly this is a most consoling doctrine!

Now I will explain to you briefly:

1. What the communion of saints is;
2. What profit each one of us may draw therefrom.

What is the communion of saints? The communion of saints is a holy society of all the faithful by virtue of which the one partakes in the spiritual goods and merits of the others, as the members of one body. St. Paul very beautifully compares all the faithful to a human body. The members of this body are not only those here upon earth, but also the Virgin Mother of God, all the saints in heaven, as well as the poor souls in purgatory. Christ, however, is the Head of this great spiritual body. Now mark well! All the members of the human body are through the flesh, sinews and veins united to one another for their mutual support. Let us suppose a case. The foot is pierced by a thorn, the whole body immediately stoops to its assistance; the eyes look at the wounded part, the mouth asks what is the best remedy for the injury, the ears listen attentively, the hands soothe the wounded part and bind it up. "If one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it" (I. Cor. xii. 26). Now that which happens to the natural body happens also to the spiritual body, which is the Church of God, the union of all the saints in heaven, upon earth, and in the place of purification, who as members of one body are all united; each one strives to help the other, every member, therefore, has recourse to the other. Let us consider now how many of these members there are and how

great the multitude of those who support us! For to this communion of saints belongs:

1. Christ, the holiest of all the saints, who is the Head of this community, its origin and founder; 2. All the angels and archangels as the most noble and excellent members of this spiritual body; 3. All the saints in heaven, above all Mary, the queen of all saints, then all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, widows, virgins, and all the innocent souls who from the beginning of the world have served God in the true faith, who walked before Him in justice and sanctity, and now enjoy eternal bliss with Him; 4. All the just, God-fearing people who are now living upon earth. 5. All those souls who as friends of God departed this life possessed of His grace, but on account of some stains are now being cleansed in the fire before they can enter into heaven. To this spiritual body belong, although as dead members: 6. all who are leading sinful, vicious lives, yet are still in the Church, profess the same faith and partake of the same sacraments. Although these in themselves are not holy, are even indeed enemies of God and deserving of damnation as long as they live on in mortal sin, still they belong to this holy community and participate in its goods, as long as they have not fallen away from the faith or on account of the magnitude of their sins have not been excommunicated. These are all united in one communion and support one another reciprocally like the members of the body. One enriches the other, one helps the other, because each partakes of the merits of the others. The proud share in the merits of the profound humility of the Mother of God; the impatient and dissatisfied share the patience of the martyrs; in the chastity of all virgins the profligate and the impure participate; in the faith and hope of all confessors the weak in faith and confidence partake.

O what happiness! What consolation for us all that we are incorporated in a community in which we share in all the merits, all the good works, all the holy sacraments, all the masses, all the indulgences, prayers, fastings, and almsgiving; all the sufferings and agony of the Lord and the saints; the perpetual hymns of praise and adoration which the angels in heaven offer to God; the intercession of all the souls in heaven and all the just upon earth! What is the richest treasury of the most powerful monarch of this earth compared to that infinite treasure in which the merits of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, of all the angels, saints and millions of just

souls are accumulated? And you have a share in this entire treasure, as poor and as humble as you may be! Even if you were as poor and as wretched as Lazarus, yet alike with queens and emperors who belong to the Church have you a share in the immense treasury of the Church, and you can say with David: "I am a partaker with all them that fear thee" (Ps. cxviii. 63).

II. Hence there arise most consoling truths:

1. Behold, dear Christian, even had you done nothing of good in your whole life, or very little, if you were ever so poor in merits and good works, you must nevertheless not despair of your salvation; for in the Church you have the boundless treasure of Christ's merits and the saints, to assist your poverty if you only desire to participate in them.

2. If you were as poor as that woman in the Temple at Jerusalem, and if your whole fortune only consisted of two farthings that you could offer, i. e., if from want of time or opportunity you had not accomplished this or that good work, and thus could not increase this great treasure, to which all the saints have contributed so munificently, still be assured that your farthing, i. e., your little good will not be despised but united at once with the great goods of the saints, and be as profitable to you as if you had thrown the most valuable contribution in the treasury.

3. If you were prevented by sickness or through unavoidable accident from visiting the Church, and could on that account not assist at Mass for a length of time, still you are sure through the communion of saints that you would participate in all the prayers, all the sacrifices and good works of your fellow Christians, if only you had the good intention to serve God as well as you possibly could.

4. If on account of the enormity and number of your sins you have deserved so severe and long a penance that you would not be able to perform it in the short course of your life, and your confessor nevertheless imposes only a slight one upon you, reflect that this is made sufficient because you as a Christian participate through the holy Sacrament of Penance in all the merits and penances of the saints and other pious Christians who passed their lives in mortifying and chastising their bodies, and thus through the merits of others the punishment of your sins is remitted.

5. If you had grown old in sins and vices, and if you could count the transgressions that burden your conscience as little as

you can number the stars in the sky at night, still you should not despair of your salvation, because even in the state of mortal sin you are still a member of the Church, if though a dead member. As a member of the Church you can still be assisted by the pious prayers of good Christians, so that finally the grace of God will move you to repent your sins, and to lead a new life. Yes; the angels in heaven also pray for the conversion of the sinner, and obtain for many the grace of a perfect conversion to God, and that they may become great saints. Behold what happiness it is to be in the Catholic Church, in which we are in communion with all the saints in heaven and upon earth, by virtue of which everything good and meritorious can avail for each one! How much we ought to pity those unfortunate ones who do not belong to the Church! How much we should pray for them and try to bring them into the same! How much, too, should we fear sin which can deprive us of this blessing of the communion of saints! Oh strive always to keep yourself in the state of God's grace! The thought of the communion of saints will console you then in life and death.

XLVII. The Tenth Article of the Creed.

"I believe in the forgiveness of sins."

SYNOPSIS.—The forgiveness of sins. In the Old Law rigorous justice held sway, in the New Law mercy tempers justice. Christ was merciful and forgave sinners. Example the woman taken in sin, the cure of the paralytic. This power of forgiving sin He gave to His apostles and their successors. This power extends to all sin, mortal and venial; it likewise extends to sin irrespective of number. Mortal sin forgiven by the Sacrament of Penance or by perfect contrition with the desire of confession. Venial sin forgiven by Sacraments: by sacramentals, by good works. Certain conditions required on the part of the sinner, viz., confession and contrition. God always awaits the return of the sinner with joy. No one need despair. Example of Mary Magdalene. Seek God in sorrow and humility.

I will explain to you to-day what we have to believe according to these words.

"I believe in the forgiveness of sins." We hereby declare that we can obtain from God forgiveness of sins, that this forgiveness, this remission of sins is found in the Church, and this in virtue of the authority which our Redeemer granted to His Church.

1. The entire Scriptures teach us that the Lord God is just and merciful; just toward the hardened sinner, merciful to repentant mankind. It was justice that predominated in the Old Law; in the New Law, however, a saving mercy governs. For after God became man the justice and mercy of God were united for our welfare. "Mercy and truth," says David, "have met each other; justice and peace have kissed" (Ps. lxxxiv. 11). Christ, in whom justice and mercy appeared in a fervent bond of charity, frequently forgave sins, and through the healing of a paralytic, which a man could not do of his natural powers, proved that He had the power from His Father to forgive sins. Now this power He gave to His Church in the persons of His apostles and their successors with the words: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them." To the prince of the apostles, St. Peter, He gave the power of the keys and said: "Whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." And in order that St. Peter might not hesitate to grant forgiveness to relapsing sinners, He commanded him not only to forgive his neighbor seven times, but seventy times seven. To this end Christ suffered and He commissioned all the apostles: "That penance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" (Luke xxiv. 47).

2. This benefit of the forgiveness of sins is ours by right of the community which we call the communion of saints. For in virtue of it we partake in all the merits of Christ, in His Passion, His blood, His death, all His works that He performed during His whole life for the sins of the entire world. Through these merits, whose value is infinite, Christ has merited for us forgiveness by God, and we obtain the pardon of our sins.

Still it is well to observe that the merits of Christ in and for themselves do not efface our sins, and that for the obtaining the forgiveness of sins it is by no means sufficient only to hope in the merits of Christ. No; these merits do not help us if we do not make ourselves partakers of them through the use of those means which God has ordained for the forgiveness of sins. These means are: Baptism and penance. Baptism effaces above all original sin; penance all actual grievous, or venial sins. We can obtain pardon of venial sin in three different ways: through the sacraments, particularly the Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, and Extreme Unction; by the sacramentals as the sprinkling of holy water, assisting at Mass, the Angelus, Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament;

finally also by the ordinary good works, as for instance the acts of contrition, faith, hope, and charity.

But particularly and above all the Sacrament of Penance has been prescribed for the forgiveness of sins of all those Christians who after baptism have sinned grievously.

No sinner, whatever his position, his age, his circumstances, can obtain even the forgiveness of a single mortal sin if he does not submit himself to the priest's authority in actual confession, or at least to the desire so do to, in case confession be not possible. Through the sacramental absolution, however, all sins without exception can be forgiven. There is none that could not find forgiveness, how great soever it might be, even the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is the greatest of all. For without restriction the Redeemer said: "Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."

3. These sins, then, are so entirely obliterated in the Sacrament of Penance that they are no longer visible to God's sight in the souls of men. Therefore the Lord says: "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow" (Isa. i. 18). Countless sinners have already experienced this. After they were converted to God, they found not only forgiveness of their sins, but very often a favor and grace which made them appear to us as special favorites of God. Thus as we know from the Gospel the Lord bestowed such marks of favor upon the fallen Magdalen, that it seemed as if He loved her more after she arose contrite from her fall than others who had never fallen. "Where sin abounded, grace hath abounded more" (Rom. v. 20). This great superabundant mercy of God toward the converted sinner Holy Scripture can not sufficiently extol. "The Lord is compassionate and merciful; long suffering and plenteous in mercy. . . . He hath not dealt with us according to our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For according to the height of the heaven above the earth, he hath strengthened his mercy toward them that fear him. . . . As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear him, for he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Ps. cii. 8-14). For this reason He does not deal with us according to the severity of His justice, but according to the clemency of His compassion for us. This we believe, this we hope as often as we say: "I believe in a forgiveness of sins."

Let none, therefore, despair even if the greatest sins burden their conscience. Behold O sinner! the gentlest of Fathers awaits thy return. The fine raiment, the golden ring of reconciliation, the heavenly banquet await thee if only in thy great danger thou wilt enter into thyself and confess to thy Father: "Father, I have sinned before heaven and before thee; I am no longer worthy to be called thy child. Treat me as one of thy hired servants." You will no sooner repent of your sins than He will hasten to meet you, and imprint upon your forehead the paternal kiss as a token that He has forgiven you your sins. For He is indeed "a Father of mercies" (II. Cor. i. 3). What can be sweeter? And "the God of all consolation." What more consoling? A God whose attribute it is at all times to be "merciful, and to spare."

Grievously does the sinner offend the Lord God by every mortal sin; but he gives a still greater offence to God when he mistrusts His goodness and mercy, or despairs of it altogether. Hence, O sinner, believe in a forgiveness of sins; but not only believe in it, hope in it also; not only hope in it, but seek also through repentance the favor and grace of your heavenly Father who is ready to forgive you, to admit you to His favor, and to number you among His children in everlasting glory.

XLVIII. The Eleventh Article of the Creed.

"I believe in the resurrection of the body."

SYNOPSIS.—The Resurrection.—Nature springing from the death of winter to the new life of spring teaches us the doctrine contained in this article of the creed. Our belief based on 1. The Resurrection of Christ. 2. The words of St. Paul. 3. Reason. 4. Natural and civil law. 5. The words of Christ—Consequences. We should conquer our evil inclinations—flee from all sin; be consoled and reconciled if poor and needy; fear God and not man, who can kill the body but can not harm the soul. Examples of St. James and St. Agapitus.

What do we see in winter time? The trees stand as if dead. For where are the leaves of the tree, the grapes of the vine? All these things, which seem to be dead in winter, grow green again in the spring, and resurrected from death, the power of life is given them again. Thus saith St. Cyril in his explanation of the eleventh article of the creed.

My dear people, will there not come for us too a day when, like the leaves from the tree, there will be taken away from us the greatest ornament of our body, life? O yes, it will surely come, this winter. For, "It is appointed unto man once to die." But there will also come the spring, with its vivifying warmth, to bring new life into all dead bodies and let us rejuvenated arise from our graves.

St. Paul the apostle says: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I. Cor. xv. 53).

I believe in the resurrection of the body.

1. In accordance with these words we consider it an absolute truth that all who have died, or still live and will die, will rise again from death and walk again in the same body, in the same flesh and bones in which we now live. For the resurrection of the body is nothing but the return to the condition in which we have lived. We believe this as confidently, as firmly and as unchangeably as we believe that God has breathed an immortal soul into our body, that Christ became man, died and was buried, that He rose again on the third day and ascended into heaven.

In this belief we differ from the pagans and infidels, who had of the immortality of the soul vague ideas, but knew absolutely nothing of the resurrection of the flesh. They imagined that with death the life of man was at an end, and they tried consequently to make this life as agreeable as possible to themselves. They ate and drank and enjoyed all earthly pleasures. But when death came they did not cease to exist. They still live, and will live forever. They will rise again with the same body which they fed in such an animal way, and which they made their idol.

2. We have the most valid reasons to believe that we shall rise again in our body. The first and foremost of which is the fact that Christ Himself rose again from the dead. His resurrection is a symbol of our own future resurrection. From this resurrection St. Paul proves to us in many ways that we also shall rise, and says: As Christ is risen, so shall we rise also. For Christ had blood and flesh like us. As the body of Christ rose from the dead, so will God in His power resurrect our body. St. Paul considered this truth as so indisputable and incontestable that he did not hesitate to say that he who denies the resurrection of the body is bound to deny all the other articles of the creed. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again. And if Christ be not risen

again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (I. Cor. xv. 13, 14). Our whole faith rests upon the belief that "Christ" suffered and "died for our sins," that he was buried and . . . "rose again the third day" (I. Cor. xv. 3, 4).

The apostle gives a second reason why our bodies will rise again in the words: "That every one may receive with the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil" (II. Cor. v. 10). The good must be rewarded and the bad must be punished. Our own reason tells us that as well as ecclesiastical and civil law, the natural as well as the written, all authorities are established by God and are in duty bound to punish the bad. But they are also in duty bound to reward the good and protect the innocent and the devout.

The apostle says: "Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise from the same" (Rom. xiii. 3). But as in this life the good are not always rewarded nor the bad punished, as on the contrary the wicked often lead a life of ease and comfort, while the good lead a life of want and penury, justice demands that there should be another, a just judge to distribute reward and punishment to all according to their deeds, in accordance with the way they have in their body done good or evil. To this end it is necessary that all should receive back their body in which they have done good or evil. There are no further proofs necessary. If we believe in Jesus Christ, we must believe in His words, for they are eternal truth. And He says clearly and distinctly: "Amen, amen, I say unto you that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live" (John v. 25).

II. 1. If we then believe that some day we shall receive back the body which was ours during life, should we not be eager to perform good works? Shoula we not suppress passion and flee sin, when we think of the ugliness in which each body which in life was a vessel of shame and a tool of sin, will appear on the Resurrection day?

2. If you are poor in this world, ill and deserted by everybody, take consolation in the words of Job: "I shall be clothed again in my skin, in my own flesh I shall see my God again."

3. Fear not those who can only hurt the body, but can do no harm to the soul; fear God alone, who can punish body and soul and destroy them for all eternity. When to the many other tortures which St. Agapitus had to suffer they added the one of heaping

burning coal upon his head, he exclaimed: "It is a small matter if this head, which will be adorned in heaven with the crown of eternal glory, has to suffer on this earth by fire." In like manner, O Christian, it does not matter much whether a member or part of your body, a tooth, a hand or a foot suffer pain, for these members will at some future time shine in heaven full of splendor like the stars. Be not therefore too careful of your body, be not too tender to your flesh, but remember that it is meet to suffer sometimes for the sake of heaven where some day, surrounded by the luster of heavenly brightness, it will glisten for all eternity. If sickness torture you, if you see limb by limb die away, do as St. James the mutilated did. A Persian King had him executed under the most cruel tortures, by having his men tear his body limb by limb, so that his terrible agony lasted fully nine hours. In this unspeakable agony the steadfast sufferer and martyr for Jesus Christ exclaimed: "Away my hand, away my foot, away my eye, etc. On the day of judgment, at the resurrection of the dead, my Creator will know how to find you again and reunite you to form a glorious whole!"

In all tribulations, sicknesses, in poverty, persecution, in cross and suffering, the thought of resurrection should therefore be ever your staff, your support and your consolation. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them who have slept through Jesus will God bring with him" (I. Thess. iv. 13) and receive them into eternal life.

XLIX. Immortality.

"And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."—Luke iii. 6.

SYNOPSIS.—Closeness of the union between soul and body. This union shall be broken by death. The body shall then return to dust, but the soul shall live on forever. Reasons for this: 1. God can preserve the soul in perpetual life, for He is Omnipotent and He is Eternal. 2. God will preserve the soul for (a) the eternal adoration and glory of God demand it; (b) the nobility of the soul calls for it; (c) the justice of God imposes it. 3. The words of Our Saviour prove this doctrine. 4. The very coming of Christ to be our Redeemer has no significance if the soul is not immortal.

This salvation, which appeared over 1900 years ago for the redemption of sinful flesh, will be seen again when the voice of the

Lord calls us from our graves. Then we shall in our own flesh see God. Then the soul will be again reunited to the body; there will further be no death, and the body will then be like the soul, immortal, destined for eternal life. It is the body which will be called to life again, not the soul. The latter shall never die; though it shall be separated from the body, it can never die. Therefore say the apostles very properly in the eleventh article of the creed: "I believe in the resurrection of the body." By that they teach us the immortality of the soul. It was feared that the belief that the soul would die with the body and that it subsequently would rise again with it would gain ground. Therefore the apostles want us to understand that of the two parts of which man is composed, only the body is subject to death and will be raised again, while the soul is imperishable, and therefore will never need a resurrection. As the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is so closely identified with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and as there are so many in our days who would like to believe that man does not continue to live after death, it will be useful to contemplate more closely the immortality of our soul.

Is it certain that the human soul is immortal? To answer this we must ask ourselves two questions:

I. Can God preserve the human soul forever?

II. Will He preserve it forever?

I. Can God preserve the human soul forever? There can be no doubt about this. God can do all that is possible, and if He could create the soul, He must certainly be able to preserve it from year to year. Is He not immortal and almighty? He is immortal means that He has an inexhaustible spring of life, and as He is almighty He must have the power to impart life to the soul, maintain this life in it and prevent its destruction. Did He not create the whole world, all the angels and beings out of nothing? If He had the power to create everything out of nothing, He certainly must have the power to preserve everything. And if God had the power to preserve from day to day for so many thousands of years such material substances as the earth, sky, sun, moon, and stars, why should He not have the power to preserve a spiritual substance like the soul, which for the very reason that it has no body should be less subject to destruction than material things? If God then is powerful enough to preserve a soul for a thousand years, He is certainly powerful enough to preserve it for all eternity.

II. Will God preserve the soul forever? This is the second question, which we will now answer. Yes; God will certainly do so; it is befitting that the soul should be immortal, and that He desires this is proved by the fact that He has actually promised immortality to the soul.

Let us inquire into the reasons for this.

(a) It is most proper, and God so wills it, that man should practice good works and shun evil; that man should glorify Him by good works and not offend Him by evil. Now in order that this take place it is necessary to believe that the soul is immortal. Whoever holds a contrary opinion will never find it necessary to practice virtue or shun vice, especially if it shall cost him self-mortification. No one would be ready to die for faith, truth and justice, no priest would go into far countries to save souls if all existence ended with death, and with no recompense, no happiness to be hoped for after death. Neither would any one fear God, or be careful not to anger Him; each one would only strive to satisfy his worldly cravings and to cater even to his shameful desires if he believed that after this life there would be no chastisement to fear nor reward to expect. Hence would be abolished all religion, all justice, faith and fidelity, and if God would not punish mankind with visible castigation, licentiousness and vice would in a short while reach such a degree again that a flood, and fire and brimstone from heaven would be necessary to wipe it out.

(b) It is befitting that God should be adored and glorified without end by all created spirits, angels and souls; for they alone are capable of knowing and loving God. This eternal adoration, however, they could never offer up if the spirits, to which also belong human souls, were mortal.

(c) It is certain that the soul is infinitely more noble, more exalted, and more gifted than the body. For through its power of understanding it is capable of knowing even such things as are exalted above space and time, that can not be perceived with the bodily senses, but are of a purely spiritual nature. By its will power it is capable of loving what is above the grasp of the senses; that is, supernatural and heavenly. It rules over the body, chastises it, opposes its inclinations and appetites, restrains its inordinate impulses and desires, keeps it in complete submission. It would not, therefore, be at all proper if the life of a soul endowed with such greatness should perish with the life of a body which is and should

be simply its servant. God, therefore, had the power to create the human soul immortal, and it is also befitting that it should be immortal. In order that no one may doubt of this, He who has never deceived, nor can be deceived, has revealed and assured us that the soul of man can never die, but will live without end, as we shall presently see.

(a) Christ expiring upon the cross commended His soul into the hands of His Heavenly Father, by crying out: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," i. e., my soul. He certainly would not have said this if His human soul was going to be destroyed with the body.

(b) When the Sadducees arose and taught that there was no immortal spirit, no life after this life, Christ convinced them of their error with the following words, found in the Book of Exodus: "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob; these names have I forever." Which means, as Christ Himself explained, "I am not God of the dead, but of the living."

(c) In the Book of Wisdom the Holy Spirit Himself says: "God created man incorruptible, and to the image of his own likeness he made him" (ii. 23). In the same holy book it says: "The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die; but they are in peace, and their hope is full of immortality" (iii. 1-5). For this reason Christ exhorted His disciples and all Christians not to fear those who out of hatred for truth would kill the body, but who could not hurt the soul. They were to fear but Him who could plunge body and soul into eternal perdition.

(d) The last article of the creed imposes the duty upon us of believing in a life everlasting. This was confirmed by Christ when He said that He would one day condemn the ungodly. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." What meaning would these words convey if after the death of the body souls did not continue to live? How could God make use of such expressions if souls were perishable?

It is certain, therefore, that souls are immortal. Upon this truth Christ founded His religion. He affirmed this doctrine of the immortality of the soul when He gave to mankind a rule of life, with the promise of eternal happiness if they kept the same, and threatened them with eternal punishment if they transgressed it.

This truth alone explains why God permits in the governing of

the world that the wicked often play an important part while the virtuous are persecuted; why the former often live in luxury and abundance, the latter in poverty and misery. God could never permit this in His justice did He not know that He had means sufficient to reward after this life the good and to punish the wicked.

In conclusion, let it be said that, if our souls were but mortal, we should be the most unhappy creatures upon God's earth. For God has implanted in our souls a longing after the supernatural. So that in this life we can never be really contented and happy. For "we have no rest until we rest in God."

This is sufficient proof that the soul is immortal. Let those who believe the contrary talk as they like: the word of the Lord which threatens these people with damnation remains true forever. They only wish to remove an obstacle to licentiousness so that they may lead lives according to their sinful desires. One day they will discover that they have deceived themselves. And let me in conclusion put this question: Would Christ have come down upon earth if our souls were not destined for eternal life?

L. The Twelfth Article of the Creed.

"And life everlasting." Amen.

SYNOPSIS.—This article of the creed teaches us that after death there is a new life which is one of bliss and which shall never end. Craving for life is natural; all classes desire life—the poor, the sick, the unfortunate, the criminal, the dying. Why is this? Because of the many joys, pleasures, charms of this life. Man puts his happiness in food, clothing, comfort, money, health. Time shall change all these; death shall destroy them. The joys of the next life endure the same, unchanged forever. The joys of heaven go on through countless centuries for all eternity. The folly of those who give up the permanent for the transitory—the true for the false. The thought of eternity has led many to forsake the world for God. Let your life be such as to merit this eternal life.

I believe in the life everlasting. With these words we confess our belief that after this life a new one begins which is 1. A life of reward or of punishment; and 2. Without end.

1. Life constitutes our highest happiness. There is nothing that we desire more than life, and nothing, therefore, is more dreadful for mankind than death. However brief and troublesome life may

be, be it accompanied with ever so many tribulations and a bitter experience, yet every one wishes to live, and to flee from death. The poorest beggar, his whole wealth a piece of bread, given by a compassionate hand, is glad of living. The criminal, condemned to death, considers it good fortune if by some slight chance his life is prolonged for even a few days. If then we so love this life, a life that is so short and subject to so many hardships, with what ardor should we not desire eternal life, which knows nothing of the sufferings of this life; that so far surpasses all the joys of this life, that abounds with joy, that is the realization of all good for soul and body, which affords that inexpressible happiness arising from the contemplation of God!

This our brief life affords many pleasures, many satisfactions, many attractions which so enthrall men that they give their whole hearts to the enjoyment of these pleasures and express a wish that their existence would always remain the same. He is happy in this life who has an abundance of food and drink, when there appears upon his table everything that his heart can wish for; when his wardrobe is plentifully supplied, when he dwells in a house that affords him every comfort, when he has wealth enough to be provided against all want; when besides all this he rejoices in perfect health so that he may enjoy his fortune. What more might he desire? But I ask you: If you had all this, what is it in comparison with life eternal? "As a wind," says Job, "this earthly life passes away, it is consumed like a cloud" (vii. 7). Yet we should rather call it death, says St. Gregory, when we compare it with eternal life. Costly food and drink are considered by some men the supreme happiness of life; and yet how brief is their enjoyment? Not to be compared with that divine table of which the Saviour Himself says: "That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom" (Luke xxii. 30). And this food alone satiates them for all eternity, so that "They shall not hunger nor thirst any more" (Apoc. vii. 16). This temporal life desires beautiful and costly raiment. But in the life everlasting the blessed are resplendent in garments of light in which they are clothed as gloriously as Christ appeared upon Thabor.

Earthly life considers itself happy in a beautiful dwelling, built of wood and stone. But the blessed in eternal life inhabit a city "the walls thereof being of precious stones, the gates of pearls, the streets of pure gold, like to clear glass" (Apoc. xxi. 18). Earthly life rejoices at the glitter of gold, and delights in the sound

of silver. And yet these are treasures which the tooth of time consumes, while in eternal life the treasures are indestructible.

Temporal life prizes health as the greatest boon, and yet it is certain that very soon this shall pass away. In eternal life sickness and death are unknown. And there "death shall be no more," says St. John, "nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more." It is a blissful eternal life, a life without end.

2. It is a life not of a thousand years, nor of a thousand million years, but an everlasting life. A million is ten times a hundred thousand years; and yet in eternal life a million years is not even a minute. What then is eternity or eternal life? It is as theologians tell us: no past, no future, an eternal to-day, an eternal now. For eternity has not been, nor is it future. It is a continual present, which remains stationary forever and will never change. There will be no yesterday, no to-morrow, but a continual now. Therefore this eternal life will be just as sweet after a hundred thousand years, still as delightful, and the souls of the blessed will rejoice no less then than they did the first day when they entered eternal life. Those souls whom Christ led to heaven out of Limbo have enjoyed eternal life for over 1900 years, and yet it must seem to them as if they had entered heaven only to-day. For in that life there is eternal peace, unending joy, perpetual bliss. O who would not address that life with St. Bonaventure: "O life flowing with life! Thou sweet, delightful life, where the greatest certainty, the most certain repose, the most reposeful gladness, the gladdest happiness, the happiest eternity, the most eternal blessedness!"

Why is it then that we love this present life, which rather resembles death than life: love it sometimes at the cost of our eternal life? Why is it that we prize more highly the wretched pleasures of this life than the delights of eternal life? How is it possible that young men and maidens sacrifice their eternal happiness that they may enter upon the path of a sinful life with its brief and unreal pleasures? How can they cast aside the life beyond, "where youth never grows old, where beauty never fades, where the marrow of health never dries up." Look at the holy martyrs! What gave them strength to endure the awful torments and to sacrifice their lives? What else but the knowledge that one day they would have to leave this mortal life, and through martyrdom they would obtain the crown of an everlasting life? Why have so many thousands forsaken property and wealth? Why have so many youths and maidens renounced the

pleasures of this life in order to lead a severe life in religious communities? From what other motive than because they remembered the promise of Christ that "these shall possess life everlasting" (Matt. xix. 29), a life without end, a life without death, a life without suffering, a life without fear, a life filled with such delights "as no mortal eye has beheld, no ear heard, no heart felt." Resolve then to lead noble, pure, Christlike lives, and thus life shall be yours for ever and ever.

Oh, my brethren, be ever mindful of the glorious everlasting life that will reward those that will strive for it.

LI. Conclusion.

"Now stand and choose."

SYNOPSIS.—For salvation we must believe; we must work. We have a soul which is immortal, which is free. This freedom consists in the power of choice between good and evil. God gave us this freedom in order to have us merit for ourselves. Our soul is destined for an eternity either of happiness or of unhappiness, depending on our own free choice. Choice is limited to this world. Saints—Souls in Purgatory—Damned not free. Choose now while there is time. Conclusions. 1. We have a soul which is most precious. 2. We have but one soul to save or to lose. 3. This means life forever or death forever. 4. We are free and must decide this for ourselves.

"Without faith," says the apostle, "it is impossible for man to please God." Faith, however, requires the knowledge of all things indispensably necessary for the attainment of salvation, namely, "that there is a God; that God has created, that He preserves and governs all things; that there are three Persons in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that the second Person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ, became man to redeem us by His death: that God is a just judge who rewards good and punishes evil."

Still faith does not avail without good works; hence we must profess all this also by our deeds, and give testimony of our faith by our life. This we are all able to do, consequently we can attain our last end and salvation if we so desire. It depends solely upon ourselves, upon our free will. For our soul, which will live eternally, we are indebted to God; whether it will be eternally happy or unhappy depends solely upon ourselves. For God has given us a soul endowed with free will.

This truth I will discuss briefly with you to-day and thus bring to a conclusion our considerations on our holy faith. When Antiochus, a king of Syria, besieged the city of Alexandria, his adversary approached with a large army to force the king to raise the siege of the city. When this could not be effected this adversary enticed the king into a meeting under the pretence of discussing terms of peace. Hardly had Antiochus made his appearance than the other marked with his sword a circle around him, and said: "Now stand and choose. You shall not move out of this circle unless you promise to withdraw your army." This was a vexing situation, but what was the king to do? He had no choice, therefore he said, I will withdraw.

My dear brethren, where do you stand now? You are standing in your own circle, in which God's omnipotence has placed you. Before you stands your adversary: death. You have no choice, it is either life or death. Eternal life, or eternal death. It truly means: "Now stand and choose!" You have the choice to be either eternally happy or eternally unhappy; it depends upon yourself. One of the two you must choose before you step out of the circle. What you now choose will be your fate. It is a vexing situation, but choose you must. It must be done. It is even our great happiness that the choice is offered us, that life and death are in our hands. Every reasoning soul has, without any compulsion, the choice to do good or evil as it wishes. It can therefore choose life by good works or death by sinning, as it wills. The good works which we are called upon to perform are only those which it is in our power to perform, those which we can perform according to our graces, strength, and position in life.

It is man's freedom to decide upon good or bad: to do good or to do evil. The human soul is so little subject in this to force that there is nothing in heaven or upon earth that can compel it to do good or evil. One can implore, promise, threaten, punish as much as one will—nothing can compel it to do either good or bad if it does not wish to.

"Stand and choose!" Now you still have freedom, you have still free will; now it is a question of eternal life or death. Perhaps some one will say: God has not done us any particular favor in giving us this free will; it might have been better if we had not had free will to do evil, but were obliged to do good: for then so many souls would not be lost. You are wrong when you speak like

this. For God has given us free will for the very reason that we might merit heaven by our own doing. We do not obtain it as a mere gift, but as a merited reward, if in this life we do good with this free will, when instead of this we might have done evil. Whereas if we only did good by compulsion, and were forced thereto by our nature, we should have no merit. If, therefore, God has given us freedom to do either good or evil, it is to place us in a position to increase our merits, to acquire the glories of heaven, and to heighten the degree of our future glory. "No one will be crowned, except he strive lawfully" (II. Tim. ii. 5). The free choice, however, will last only as long as our life. The saints in heaven have no other freedom than to do good; for this reason also they can no longer merit anything. The damned in hell have no longer any freedom, hence they can not be delivered from hell. The poor souls in purgatory also can no longer merit anything; they can only await their time of deliverance. In this world alone can man make use of the freedom to do good or evil, of the freedom to merit eternal life or death.

"Stand and choose," dear Christian. Now there is still time. Choose life or death. You still have freedom, death will put an end to it for you. What would not the damned give if they could obtain only a minute of time to arouse contrition? What would not the poor souls in purgatory give just for one hour in which to perform meritorious works? And you can still do this! You still have the power, the free will to do good, or bad, as you will. Do good and God will say of you: "He could have transgressed, and hath not transgressed; and could do evil things, and hath not done them: therefore are his goods established in the Lord" (Ecclus. xxxi. 10). Do evil, however, and it will be: "Thy ruin proceeds from thyself, Israel." You could have done good, but you would not, and therefore now you will be lost.

Look around you, dearly beloved, and choose! But do not choose that which will cause you everlasting misery. I shall close this sermon, and at the same time this series of instructions upon Catholic Doctrine, by drawing the following lessons from what we have learned:

1. Dear Christians, we have a soul, which is so noble and so precious in God's sight that there is nothing in the created world of as much value as one single human soul.

2. We have but one soul; if this is lost, all is lost; no hope of

our obtaining another. God has given us two eyes, two ears, two hands, two feet—and yet how careful we are of each of them, how we grieve over the loss of even one of these limbs! Therefore, as we have only one soul, should we not rather lose an eye, a hand, or a foot, even indeed our whole body, than our soul?

3. We have an immortal soul which will live forever, eternally happy or unhappy; therefore, as we know this to be true beyond doubt, should we not do our very utmost to assure it a life of everlasting bliss. Day and night we are solicitous as to how to provide support for this our natural life; and how long does it last? Very often we do not live to enjoy that which we have accumulated with so much labor. But in heaven we shall live eternally and never die. How much better efforts should we therefore make to provide for a life of eternal happiness!

4. As this all depends upon our free choice, which is only in our power during life, it follows that we should do good while we have the time, and avoid evil, and thus choose life instead of death. Let us, therefore, now lead good, devout, God-fearing and Christian lives, so that we may one day receive our reward for all eternity. This is my most ardent wish. The Lord grant His blessing to my words and let them be fruitful in your hearts.

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